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THE GOSPEL

OF THE

KAILEDY

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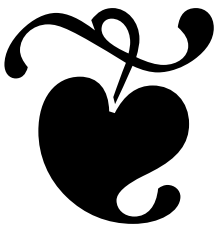
KAILEDY

Previously called

The Book Of The Illuminators
Having The Authority Of The Nasorines

This being the second volume of

THE KOLBRIN



DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the
forerunners and heralds of
The Celestial Age which is the promise
lying just over the horizon of the future.
It is intended to be accepted as a vehicle for
conveying spiritual knowledge and is to be
assessed by the overriding concepts
it is intended to convey.

It is dedicated to those stalwart souls
who still honour the precepts, ethics
and traditional values which have been a
guiding light down through the civilising cen-
turies. It is dedicated also to the
concept of True Love and the promotion
of family ethics, to the effect that
families become more enduring.

The contents of this book are copied
from a copy of an original held by a
closed Arcane Order. It is destined to
be published in 1998, two years after
The Holy Spirit will manifest on
earth in a new phase.

To all those who have helped in
bringing this work to fruition
the book is dedicated.

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Chapter One

STRENGTH AND COURAGE be yours and greetings to my brothers in Doiva, the Koferils at Karimba. Know that I have been cast out with my brothers, but of the places wherein they shelter I have no knowledge. It is a time of heart-searching sorrow, for as the inspirational lights are snuffed out a dark night of ignorance descends. They who oppose us are strong, not only in weaponry but more so in guile, and they have the support of the dark strangers. Hundreds of wonderful books, the lifework of diligent hands, have been used to heat the fleshpots, and there is a constant searching of all which does not accord with foreign beliefs.

Since there are many versions, though not all in conflict concerning matters we hold to be true, I have taken it upon myself to prepare this one for you from the writings saved in flight. Pitifully few are the books salvaged from the great conflagration and brought out under our gowns: inadequate undergarments for cold bodies, but not comfortless companions.

Perhaps what I write here in my cold solitude will, in days to come, dance on the tongues of the multitude, gladdening the hearts of those who rest in greater comfort. Be on your guard, my brothers, talk well out of the mouth and ear of the wind, for uncomfortable abodes await those who place the tongue in command.

In order that the truth may be properly displayed, I have

united in one narrative the diverse accounts brought to these shores by the Kailedy, in the days of battleglory, when the mantle of Herthew descended upon Inhawk Caradew. Led by wise Elyid, the Noble Commander, they were compatible companions of the brave Britons. I have faithfully copied the accounts of that John whom we call Numa, who knew our earthly father, touching on events of his times according to the books which have been written and left to us. Here is the Book of John the Enlightened of God and the Book of the Nasorines and the Illuminated Ones, but the Book of Indractus and the Book of Sayings by the Wise Elyid are with our brother Lewid and his band in Branset.

These bring all who follow and fight for the cause of Truth a message, simple but sublime, meaning one thing only - man can break free from the fetters of time, to spread wings of the spirit and fly to eternity, borne upward by an inspirational strengthening outflowing from God.

No man lives and no man dies by himself alone, all must live by the efforts of others, and dying takes something from them. Therefore, when living it is well to give, for giving is not least among the obligations of life. When I lay down my burden, when I am worn out, there will be better men, young and strong, to carry the light of Truth on high. They will climb by the steps I have cut, mounting by the ladder I have made, never knowing the artisan's name. They will perhaps laugh at my clumsy workmanship, but I pray they will not despise it. If they do no more than utilise whatever good they find, then I have served well and go happily to my rest.

It is well to write these things, though in truth there is none to lend me an ear but many who would ply my back with rods. Yet whatever is conveyed into the ears and comes out through the mouths of men, no matter how manifestly true it may be of itself, always tends to assume a form of less worthwhile substance and it is subject to more misinterpretations and distortions than when it is transmitted through the inarticulate quill. What issues from the mouth is so often unlike that going into the ear, that surely between the two there must be a strange transmuter.

This is no easy burden laid upon me. The light of Truth guides men safely through the most troubled waters, but if that light be deflected or distorted, or if the fuel on which it feeds be impure, it may well become a wrecker's light leading them to destruction. Light are the hearts attending the food tables, laughing and jesting round the meadhorns, but heavy the heart carrying much responsibility.

I am one who can overcome the distinctions between Jesus and Esures, reconciling the crystal virgin with mystic motherhood. I can place the clear moonfilled chalice beside the golden blood-filled cup. I can combine the stargirt Circles of Eternity with the lowly cross, and the defeated suffering son with the victorious battleinspiring fighter. I am one who would welcome the day when the floodgates of our knowledge can be opened wide, so no man perishes through lack of refreshing water.

Who knows what our angered assailants with dark ways, harbouring concealed mysteries, will spawn from the far ranging Circles. They trail like shackled slaves after the grudged offerings of those who seek only worldly power, disclaiming the knowledge held by their firmstanding brothers. Let us who are homeborn stand as one in all things, and not least in belief, for we are surrounded by darkbearded men with strange ways. Swordless we can only appeal for a heavenly power to become the smasher of swords.

In this woeful world created from the three fountains springing from the Spiritland behind the wall of black mist, we can only play a part which accords with our abilities. The clerk cannot become a swordfighter or the husbandman a judge, otherwise confusion would reign supreme. The brick has its proper place and cannot replace the lintel, neither can the hearthstone become a door.

So now I speak to you through the mercy of God who has brought me to a safe though cold and desolate haven. Yet is not its very discomfort compatible to my work? For overmuch comfort and ease are handmaidens of sloth. My preordained purpose is therefore to apply myself diligently to the task in hand, sustaining myself and my quill by the bodies of beasts. I send you therefore my blessing and the true message of God, Aweh and Dewi, the Spiritking and Father of All.

These are wholesome and beneficial writings, a river of words outflowing from the everliving source of life. They are not unworthy of even the greatest king. He who receives them, safeguarding them from distortion and convenient misinterpretation, absorbing and practising what they teach, shall not pass into the Circles of Darkness but enjoy an everlasting upward striving life in the bright Circle of Light. Happy are they who, liberated from earthly life, awaken to a haven in the Circle of Glory.

May the knowledge of the Unseen God and the light of His Truth be with you always. Above all, be strong in the light; it is not sufficient to be a lightbearer, for the light is a fragile thing and needs ironhearted protectors. Fine words serve well enough, but serve better when supported by strong and resolute arms. Therefore, not only must you abide by the laws of God, ordained for the benefit of man, you must also keep sharp weapons for their defence. It is well enough to preach great principles to a quietly listening crowd, but the value of those principles are best tested before a hostile demonstration.

May the Strengthening Spirit fill your heart and the Guiding Spirit turn you away from every form of evil, both protecting you from every assailant. May the Comforting Spirit have compassion on your weaknesses and tend your wounds when you are smitten by those knowledgeable in worldly wiles. May the doorways of your heart be ever open to admit the light of Truth and knowledge, that the inner chambers of your being be so enlightened you may there perceive your own soul in the fullness of its glory and power.

The differences between right and wrong, light and darkness, knowledge and ignorance, are great indeed, but no man spans the gulf between and embraces both within himself. Yet men choose evil as well as good, and this because they find pleasure in it. The king lives in a palace, it is the place to which he belongs, it is a compatible residence for him. The swine lives in a sty, it is the place to which it belongs, it is compatible, and therein, wallowing in muck, it finds pleasure. The king enjoys beauty, the swine enjoys filth. The king for the palace, the swine for the sty, each enjoys its own place.

There are, as you know, two Spiritplaces to which the souls of men are drawn, to which they have an affinity according to their earthly pleasures. If these are of the light, they go to the fount of light, but if their pleasures are of the darkness, surely they must be drawn towards the seat of darkness.

We who are of the light need not fear the spirits which project out from the light, but what of the dark spirits which are hostile towards the light? These are the unwelcome intruders into this, the Earth circle of life, bringing sickness and corruption to whatever they touch. If we attribute goodness to a source of good, must we not also attribute evil to a source of evil? If goodness intrudes into life, is it not obvious so does evil?

The spawners of evil are not united with the source of light, they have cut themselves off, for even as the treegrub protects itself from the sunlight which would otherwise destroy it, so must the evilswarm protect itself. My brothers, rejoice with me in the light, love your neighbours, for is not love the greatest light of life?

My strength is not untested in the solitude. Sometimes I am overshadowed by gloom. I think of the ways of life and wonder, what is man? He appears suddenly out of the darkness, entering the light of a well lit performing arena where, for a brief moment, the role is played. He flashes in an illuminated moment of eternity before vanishing back into the unknown. Briefly, he dances like a shadow cast by flickering candlelight, to merge back with the surrounding darkness when the candle burns no more. It seems presumptuous of mere men to set themselves up as interpreters of their state, so sometimes I ask myself, who really knows what man is and where he goes? Well may so many enquire who has come back from that mysterious region outside the Circle of Illumination to tell what lies beyond the depths of darkness, to relate his experience and knowledge gained.

Then my heart rises above its conditions and I see beyond the mean quarters, the privation and squalor. I know such a return has been made, that the shadow can never lose its affinity with the substance of its creation. Doubt is an earthly condition imposed on men for their own good, its benefits no less great for not being

readily apparent. It seems that knowledge of what lies beyond the enveloping shadows must, by the very nature of things, be withheld from the multitude of men. Certainty and assurance are manifestly not part of this earthly state. It is also in the nature of man that he should too readily meddle in things having an untoward effect on his mission in life.

I mourn yet for our brother Lanvid, companion of my former days, the lightener of my task. Yet I grieve no more than duly, for his spirit has cast off the restrictions of the body, and taking upon itself a form of glory flies on ghostly wings to the Circle of Radiance. He has left this dull world of heaviness and is now attired in garments of glory. He has departed to a haven free from the sordidness of earthly struggle. He has flown beyond our sight and hearing, yet he is not far distant, dwelling in the free world of compatible spirits.

Often, in my solitude, I say, would I were a barren tree bearing neither blossom nor fruit, for the pangs of fertile generosity are harder to bear than the woes of barrenness. I am often perplexed in my heart, for in worldly matters I am not a knowledgeable man. Yet I cast away these untoward thoughts, for of truth life must be lived to its fullness and cannot be unless it is utilised to make a beneficial contribution to the lives of others.

Let us go forward together, for we are apart only in distance. Let us not be men of yesterday whose eyes are fixed on the shadows of the past, nor men of tomorrow preparing for events which never occur, while being unprepared for the unexpected. If we truly claim to have the light, then should we not be in the van and not the rear? Let us therefore go forward and take our rightful place.

Chapter Two

WHEN ELYID, our father in the faith, came in full flight from afar, seeking refuge beyond the confines of his persecutors' dominion, he set his kolistone in Lanavalok. Here, when he spoke to them, the Druthin said, "We have never been without the light of Truth, yet you seek to bring another light, strange to us, which seems less bright than ours."

Then Elyid said, "Let us not argue as to whose light, lit at the fount of Truth, burns brightest, but let us put our two lights together so they may jointly give more illumination and dispel more darkness." The Druthin said, "The light of your teachings was always foreshadowed and He of whom you bring tidings is not unknown to us. The origin of Truth is immaterial, for it stands alone on its merits and should always be welcomed, being unlike men who have to be supported by their lineage."

The lights were put together to become one, and we alone are its inheritors. Do others have the three guiding lights of life – Truth, Love and Justice – which all must strive to express in perfection? Or do they know the three things to be uncompromisingly combated - irresponsibility, hypocrisy and self-centredness? Or the three cornerstones of character - spirituality, integrity and individuality? My brothers, an awful darkness spreads over the land and I fear for the safety of our light.

Since the ravens changed their feathers from white to black, love, though esteemed in many forms, is not what it used to be.

The love of man and woman has become a thing for lewd jest or righteous disgust. In the days of freedom love dwelt graciously in a house of beauty erected by the highest aspirations of men; they paid manly homage outside her door, those granted entry displaying justifiable pride in their achievement. Now, men batter down the door while under the whiplash of lust, polluting the purity within, and call it freedom.

Once love stood on a sunlit hilltop, clothed in modesty and decorum, but now the climb is too difficult for spiritually weakened bodies, so she is lured into the shadows below. There she has become a befouled, distorted ghost of her former self. Love and beauty are the reflections of God in the mirror of man, but the image once reflected in radiant loveliness is now distorted to ugliness. Perhaps we have failed, but we are so few!

Is it that love now lacks the nourishment of sincerity without which it declines and dies? Maybe, since we no longer control our destinies at war men are less ready to strive for the laurels of love, while women bestow the jewel of their bodies with wanton indifference to the needful sacrifices required to sustain it. A new, unhallowed love walks the land, unclean harlots and those in whom purity becomes the shroud of love joining forces against the wonder once glorifying life. Love, for which noble-hearted men and pure women would once gladly die, now is so frail it withers at the first breath of adversity or departs at the luring call of lust. Now, true love can be found only where cats have horns. What has happened to the harp-praised glory of the past?

In the dark night descending, my heart is heavy with desolation and loneliness. My only consolation is that I can still follow the path of duty, knowing the bud of duty grows into the rose of sacrifice which falls to bear fruits of the spirit. Duty is not the least of our lights, but in this land, among our people, it is the child of a barren woman.

My brothers, with this I send the book concerning Jesus Iduin, son of Joseph the carpenter and Mary, who, through His sacrifice to love and duty became our own Esures. His teachings were brought to us by those who lived within the circle of His

light, and safeguarded by our earthly father in the faith, he being not least among the articulate ones who knew Jesus, and a person of no mean estate, both in the distant land from whence he came and in this no less virile land.

Jesus was a fountain of goodness fed by the bountiful spirit of eternity, a pure stream of wisdom refreshing the longing spirits of men. He responded to their yearning desires as a bee is drawn to the scent of roses. He came to fulfil the desires and longings of men, expressed in certain Holy Books but more so living unspoken in many unlettered hearts. For such is the nature of things that the tree springing from the yearnings of men shall not fail to bear fruit, the Holy Books being likened to an egg containing the embryonic hopes and aspirations of men.

In the Holy Books of the Jews it is said that the Son of Man is the Shepherd of Men, and we here know how a shepherd tends his flocks. But Jesus came, not as a shepherd to drive but as one bearing a guiding lantern to light the way through darkness. It was also said: 'The Son of Man is the Deliverer of Men', and while we know truly from what we have to be delivered, those in His own land misunderstood the meaning.

Chapter Three

THESE ARE THE THINGS written in his book concerning John of the Wilderness, which was brought to these shores by Aristolas and is no longer with us. The father of John was Zukaris, son of Bakaris, and he was a priest at the temple, married to Elizabeth from the stock of Aaron.

They were both strong in the faith of their God, obeying the laws revealed to His prophets, but childless and well advanced in years. Elizabeth had resorted to many shrines, praying for a child, but hitherto her pleas had gone unanswered.

In the fifth month of the year, when fire was burnt before Gabriel in the court within the outer walls of the temple enclosure, called the Court of the Gentiles, Zukaris was priest at the altar of incense. Then a strange thing happened while he was alone inside, the people being outside praying. A spirit messenger appeared on the right side of the altar and a voice said, "Have no fear of me, for I come to say your prayers have not gone unheeded and your wife will bear a son."

"He will become a great teacher filled with the power of the Holy Spirit, but you must bring him up in the ways of the Nasorines. He will herald the coming of an Enlightener who will turn men from wrongful ways, making them upright and strong in spirit." Zukaris listened, too frightened to speak, but thought, "How can this be when we are both weighed down with years?"

The spirit messenger said, "He will save many from the effects

of ignorance, leading men back to the fold of God whom he will serve with the spirit and power which once was Elijah's. He will turn the hearts of fathers towards the welfare of their children, and those who have fallen away from the teachings of their fathers towards the wisdom of the law. He will go before the people like a brazier bearer before a caravan, like a prophet of old, to make ready a people purified and dedicated to the Most High God."

When Elizabeth knew she was with child she went to the temple and gave thanks to the God who had caused her to conceive, dedicating her child to Him, according to the custom. Thus it had been with Samuel who was given back to his Father for service in the sanctuary.

Now, when her time came the wife of Zukaris gave birth to a son and there was no midwife to bring him into the world, neither was a birthbell made for him. Though all others wished him to be called after the kindred of his father, Elizabeth said he should be called after hers, and he was named John.

At the time of circumcision, when many people were standing about, Zukaris became filled with the power of inflowing spirit and under its influence spoke as follows, "Blessed be the God of our people who has given them the means of their redemption. He has brought forth a spring of salvation for us, fulfiling the words spoken by the mouths of His inspired prophets which have been since the beginning, that we should be delivered from the hands of our enemies and saved from those who hate us. The child of my body shall go before the people, proclaiming the way of God and giving knowledge of salvation for His people, with the remission of their misdeeds through repentance and reparation. Like the sun source on high he has descended to give light to those who sit in darkness. He will console them in the shadow of death and guide the feet of men into the ways of peace."

"As it is written in the books of the temple, 'Hear the voices crying out of Levi and Juda, never turning away, for from their loins shall come the chastening rod of the Highest God. He will raise up from Levi a priest above all other priests, and from Juda someone greater than a king who will deliver My people'."

The people, hearing these and many other things, were amazed and stored them up in their hearts, saying one to the other, "This is no ordinary child, and surely he will grow to be an unusual man, therefore let us watch and wait for some interesting developments." Among those who heard was one with an unbridled tongue who spread the word of these things abroad, and between the ears and mouths of many people the events became magnified in such a way as to cause concern in high places.

When the Herod who was king heard these things he deliberated with the Council, for all awaited the coming of a Chosen One anointed by God, but the learned priests said this could not be He whom they awaited. For, said they, it was not possible that one with his blood could be either the Chosen One or the Deliverer, such would be an abomination. Then Herod said, "That may be, but let us bring the child into our own fold, for if perchance he be the Chosen One it is well for him to be raised among us. But if it be otherwise no harm is done, and in days such as these it is well to be prudent."

Now, word of these intentions were sped out by a maidservant, passing through the ears of slaves to the kindred of Elizabeth who hastened to warn her. They said, "This is a day of woe, for men come from Herod to take away your child and offer him up as a sacrifice." So Elizabeth, in fear for her child, gathered him up, saying to a manservant, "Take all that can be carried and meet us at such a place," and then she went to Zukaris.

Elizabeth found him at his place in the temple and said, "Come, my husband, let us flee quickly with the babe, for here he is in danger. Tarry for nothing, unless we make haste our little one will be lost to us, he who is the treasure of our life and the hope of our people."

Zukaris said, "How can I leave my post in the temple to go into a strange land where perchance people will have no knowledge of my God? Then Elizabeth said, "O my husband, if you will not come tell me what I must do to save my baby, I cannot waste time here when men come to put him to death." He answered her, "Flee to the wilderness of Shaba where, by the will

of God, you will both survive. If they come seeking to find him here, or expect to find him through me, then my blood will be shed instead of his, for it is blood they want."

Then Zukaris took the babe into a place beside the altar and kissed and blessed him, saying, "My son, treasure of my latter years, who gladdened my heart and made light the burden of days, now my cup of sorrow overflows. I am to be cut off from the pleasure of holding you, no longer may I feel my heart leap with gladness when I see your face. You are too young for my words to reach your understanding and it is not my hand which will guide your feet, but go out strong in your dedication to God," To Elizabeth he said, "May our God and the God of our fathers protect you."

Elizabeth said, "Dedicated priest and husband, pray for us both, that we may not be taken and I shall be given strength to overcome the difficulties of the wilderness." Zukaris said, "He who gave us a child in our old age will not take it away from you, neither will the child perish. May the protective power of God overshadow your journey."

Now, the men sent out by Herod were of his guard and when they came to Zukaris and asked concerning the child, he did not lie but said, "His mother has taken him and fled in fear into the wilderness." So they who had come returned to Herod and said, "The child has been taken into the wilderness by its mother, no food or water is there but many wild beasts, and the woman being old surely both must perish."

Then those who had the ear of Herod said, "Surely there is something more to all this, is it likely the woman would have fled friendless? Let us send other men, not of the guard, who will act differently." So Herod, being troubled in his heart, agreed and three men with knives came to Zukaris before sunrise, saying "Herod has commanded us, 'Tell Zukaris his life is in my hand and I order him to speak truly concerning the whereabouts of his son'." Zukaris answered, "I am a dedicated servant of God and obliged to continually attend His temple, therefore my son's whereabouts are not within my knowledge." They said, "Our

knives will open your mouth," but Zukaris was unafraid and replied, "If my blood be shed God Himself will bear witness to the deed, and innocent blood never cries out to Him in vain."

When Zukaris saw he spoke in vain and no words would turn their intentions, he took refuge at the sanctuary behind the altar, his hands on the horns. But they stabbed him with knives so he died, for they were strangers in ignorance of the law.

When the morning hour of salutation came and the priests went out, it was seen that Zukaris failed to pay the accustomed homage, and they asked among themselves why he tarried. Then one went from them into the sanctuary of Zukaris and saw his body lying bloodied beside the altar. A voice was heard saying, "Zukaris is dead and lies in his blood, but the stain shall not be removed until the coming of one who will avenge the deed. Woe to those who shed innocent blood. Woe to those who let it remain unavenged. Woe, for one comes who will destroy the temple rites."

On hearing this the priests ran out, crying, "Zukaris is dead and an avenging spirit has taken up residence in his place." But the others went in and saw the cloths about the altar were torn and the carved woodwork broken. So report of these things was made to the people who mourned three days and nights, after which another priest was appointed. The body of Zukaris was shrouded in linen and placed in a tomb beside his father.

Elizabeth was alone with the child, she was old and found life difficult to sustain in the wilderness, the manservant having departed with her goods. She discovered a cave where there was a seepage of water and lived there until John was eight years of age. Then she died and the child did not understand, neither did he know what to do or how to bury her. But the everpresent God intervened in His manner and some people who lived apart from others were directed to him, and he was raised in their ways. He remained with them until the day he went forth to herald the coming of the Deliverer.

The people among whom John was raised did not marry, but adopted outcasts and orphans while they were young. They were godly people in their own way, but did not concern themselves

with others. John rebelled against their exclusiveness, desiring to carry tidings concerning the coming Instructor in Goodness to the common people.

In those days there was much confusion among men regarding One Who Would Come, and He was given many names and attributes. Therefore, none really knew what He would be like and many sought only for enlightenment on this matter.

Chapter Four

WHEN JOHN HAD GROWN to manhood he reappeared in the wilderness of Bethimra, proclaiming, "Change your ways, for you have fallen into error and ignorance. Return to the teachings of the law, interpreting them without guile, and turn your eyes towards the new light of the coming day. For One comes who will be the promised Instructor in Goodness, to establish the Government of God." Then the people said among themselves, "Surely, this is he of whom it is written 'the voice of a herald will cry out from the wilderness. Make a highway for God, let the swift rivers be bridged, the high mountains passed and the rough places made smooth. For the impassable places will be crossed and the wilderness, made to flourish'."

Some came to John from the place of his upbringing, who said, "Withdraw from the people, for they are no concern of yours. In good time preach purification of the Spirit and suppression of passion, but meanwhile you are too inexperienced." John said, "Worthy teachers, you dress in white proclaiming your purity yet fear to put this to the test. Is your flesh so weak that it must be kept continually under restraint? Is the imprisoned malfactor good by his own desire or by his circumstances? Is not the world a place of temptation so each may discover his own strength or weakness? Untested you can know neither and must always remain in a state of doubt."

"The fire hidden in wood gives warmth only when released,

it also provides light and is useful, but while hidden away it is of little value. A tree left growing uncut falls and rots, serving no man. So, too, is it with knowledge and wisdom, for only when utilised can they have any value. Goodness is not assessed only by the things done, for the things left undone are not overlooked."

John appeared strange in the eyes of those who saw him, for he was wildhaired and large, clothed in a garment of hair as were the prophets of old, and bound about with a leather girdle, like Elijah. His food was locusts and bread dipped in wild honey, for he was of the Zofim who watched for the Coming of the Kingdom. He came to bear witness to the light which should shine in the hearts of all men. But the Jews would not heed him, for he used cleansing waters, which they did not. This, he said, signified the washing away of the causes of illusion and the impurities of life. He was a cleanser of minds and hearts.

There were mockers, but they were afraid to come near John. Yet many listened to the message and were cleansed in the River of Life, providing they were wholehearted in a desire to change their ways. John knew some were hypocrites and he held them long under the water, for he said they required a lot of purifying. Few men argued with John, though it is in the nature of Jews to argue.

This is how John testified when priests and learned men were sent to question him, saying, "Who are you?." He said, "I am not the One you anticipate, whose coming is at hand. Is it not written, 'I will send a forerunner to prepare the way?' I am that herald. Soon the One you seek will hasten to acquire His kingdom, He will be like a refining fire preparing you for participation."

"I am one who verifies the prophets of old who said, 'Take heed, for the day comes which shall burn like a fire, when the self-satisfied and wrongdoers shall burn like stubble so neither branch nor root of their wickedness shall be left'."

Then some who enquired of John said, "If you are not the Expected One why do you baptise?" He replied, "I teach cleansing in water as a sign of repentance for the past and rebirth into another way of life. I herald the coming of Someone much

greater who is now born among you. He is One whose sandal bands I am unworthy to unlace. I use water, but He will immerse men in spiritpower and cleanse them with disciplinary fire. He is the bearer of a winnowing fan and will thoroughly cleanse the threshing-floor, gathering the wheat into the granary and burning the useless chaff."

Then one said, "No good thing ever came out of the wilderness", but John overhearing him said, "Recall the days of our forefathers, when the wandering in the wilderness was over and they came to a land where there was an abundance of milk, butter and cheese, where the sheep grew fat and corn grew plentifully, where the vine flourished and all good things for the nurture and comfort of man were found. Then the people became weak in body, slothful, their minds turning to unclean things; they forsook the ways of God and had little respect for the teachings of the law. From which did they derive the most benefit, from the wilderness or from the land overflowing with good things? Pity me not for my days in the wilderness, but pity yourselves who have been denied manmaking experiences."

John said, "Woe to you who have taken to the keeping of many slaves, for you, having robbed the man with a small plot of ground of his livelihood, are worse than thieves. You roll your eyes upward, saying, 'Never would I steal a loaf of bread', and condemn one who steals because of his emptiness. Your stomachs are full but your hearts are empty of goodness. Take heed of my words, for surely if any man act so he bring another to wrongdoing, even though the other be in a far distant land, he shall not be blameless in the sight of God."

"Hypocrites, you cast a piece of silver at the feet of a beggar sitting beside the temple gate and say, 'I have done good', but how small the goodness compared with the wickedness done to those unseen! What of the disinherited ones, victims of your avarice? They have been driven from their homes and lie shivering in the coldness of the night, no roof protecting them from the night dampness. They huddle uncomfortably under rocks for shelter, aching empty stomachs denying them sleep. They rake the hard

hot ground with bony fingers and gnaw coarse roots with teeth loosened in their gums. Their mouths are dry, and sour and bitter unsatisfying leaves become an acceptable diet."

"When they crave for the relief of bread, driven desperate by mouthwatering smells carried on the air, and steal some small thing, they are harried by well fed tyrants such as the slave owners among you. Take heed of this, for it is the law: If a hungry man steal because of the emptiness within his stomach, the crime is not with him but with those whose hands hold the power."

Those to whom John spoke said, "Tell us not of these things, for we have rulers. We give to the poor outside the temple, but if we gave to the multitude of the poor we would only be added to their number. Tell us about the Deliverer." John said, "From what do you expect the Deliverer to save you?" They said, "It is written, 'He will deliver us from the hands of our enemies'."

John said, "He will perform no mean task, but will save you from the greatest of enemies. Tell me, which presents the most danger, those who lay siege to a fortress from outside, or those within its gates, cunningly biding their time with concealed weapons? Surely, it is the enemy within who is most to be feared. Therefore I declare to you, the Deliverer comes not to fight against the enemy clamouring outside, for the silent unseen foe within is most to be feared." Many shook their heads and said quietly, "This man is mad."

Then one among those who listened said, "If he tells of the ways of God, surely those ways are strange." John overhearing this said, "The ant cannot understand the ways of an eagle, nor an eagle the ways of a man. How much less can man understand the ways of God!"

One standing close to John said, "If a man is ruled by two kings, which should he obey, the one who is close or the one who is far distant?" John said, "If I answered you straightly, would you follow my advice?" The man replied, "Surely, for I am perplexed and would hear your words." John said, "Obey the rule of the king closest to you, he who reigns in your heart."

Now, John testified concerning Jesus in this manner. "These

are the things written in the Holy Books about He who will come. 'Then shall God raise up a new High Priest like no other before Him, and He will reveal God in a new light to the understanding of men. He will set the feet of men on the path of rightful judgement'."

"He shall shine forth as the sun over the Earth, removing all darkness from it, and will arm men with the sword which brings everlasting peace. His star will shine above like that of a king, its light kindling the lamp of knowledge, enlightening men as the suns lightens the day'."

"He will proclaim the kingdom wherein the sword will be drawn against the wrongdoers, and the injustices of the poor will be redressed. There shall arise a Chosen One from among you who will deliver you from your enemies'."

John also said, "Already the axe is laid at the root of the vines, for was it not prophesied that every tree bearing sour fruit will be hewn down and burnt? Therefore, do not be fuel for the fire, but produce the good fruits of repentance wherein lie the seeds of your salvation. The day is not far distant when each shall be called to an accounting, some enjoying the fruits of their labour and rising into glory, while others go down into darkness and shame."

There was a time when many temple worshippers came to gain rebirth through the cleansing waters, and John said to some self-righteous ones among them, "Children of the viper's brood, what has caused you to seek escape from the fate in store for you? Produce deeds consistent with repentance and console yourselves no longer by saying, 'We are of the seed of Abraham'. I say, being of the seed of Abraham serves you no better than being one of those stones."

When the people said, "Tell us what we should do," John replied, "No man wears two coats, so let the man who has two share with the man who has none. Whoever has a store of food beyond his needs, let him do likewise." A tax gatherer asked him, "What shall I do? John answered, "Exact nothing above the amount fixed for collection and never exploit the defenceless and

unlearned." Some soldiers asked him what they should do, John said, "Never be unnecessarily cruel or threaten to bring false charges, and make sure you always live within your earnings as soldiers." Then a captain said, "What shall I do who must enforce commands?" John replied, "Make sure the commands are just and do not extend beyond the need of the circumstances."

A man of priestly rank said to John, "Why do you not offer incense and sacrifice?" John answered, "Such things are not fitting for the Most High God who is already full with all things and lacks nothing. Therefore, honour Him by giving thanks for His benefits and let your only sacrifice be dedication to His service."

A priest among the crowd said to John, "Do you say the God of our fathers is not a Great God?" John replied, "You know His requirements and whether these be worthy of a great or small God." Then some cried out, "Pity him, for he is only a waif of the wilderness, having neither father nor mother." John answered, "Have I not said, pity me not, for the wilderness was a goodly father, making me strong and hardy, can I not outrun the gazelle and lift a great stone? No sickness eats my body and I can bite through a halter line."

"What of these people fattened at the tables of their fathers, like geese prepared for the banquet. They say, 'We are the light of the land', but I tell you they are an unprofitable burden. They say, 'Give us white water to quench the fire in our stomachs' when everyday they kindle the fire anew through their mouths. For things that pass pleasantly through the mouth often stir up strife in the belly."

John was the light of the light, the herald of the Deliverer coming to purge the world of wrongdoing by enlightening men, showing what was right and what was wrong. For though men had the light of the law, many saw it only dimly or with distortion, while many interpreted the law to make it accord with their convenience. The true Deliverer was One who would deliver men from themselves, exposing their weaknesses, failings and hypocrisies only that they might benefit, the purpose and intent being wholly good.

Glory to the Supreme God reigning in the sphere above all, may peace and plenty fill the Earth and goodwill extend to all creation. May suffering, turmoil and disaster quickly serve their purpose through the co-operation and understanding of man, so they may pass away as things no longer necessary for his upbringing. Blessed be those who preserve these words, and may those who alter them suffer for what they do.

Chapter Five

THE WORLD IS GLORIFIED through men whose lives are governed by dedication and duty, who completely devote themselves to carrying out the purpose ordained by God, using earthly conditions to this end. The desires and longings of the heart, the hopes and aspirations of men will never go unfulfilled or be ignored by God while men are willing to rise to greatness through selfless sacrifices and devotion to duty. The highest duty to which anyone can be called is service and suffering in the cause of God.

The birth of Jesus the Nasorine, who became our Master and Interpreter of God and the law, a worthy vessel for the greatest manifestation of the power of the Holy Spirit seen on Earth, occurred in this manner.

About the time John the Forerunner commenced teaching the Way of the Wilderness beside Jordan, in the year before Herod died, when Augustus Ceasar ruled the Roman world, a babe was born. The father was Joseph, son of Heli, a carpenter of Galilee, and the mother Mary, his wife, who had been a virgin pledged to God and the temple by her father Simon, son of Yorkim, son of Nathan, son of Elazer.

A decree had gone out that all who claimed kinship within the House of David should be gathered for enrolment at the City of David, called Bethlehem in Galilee. Therefore, Joseph, being rightfully born into the stock of David, took the scroll of his

parentage and went to Bethlehem so his kinship could be established.

Now Mary, being then heavy with child, longed in her heart to be among her kinfolk and she prevailed upon Joseph to take her, for Bethlehem was only a day's journey from them. The two, with a servant, came to Bethlehem at eventide, but because so many had gathered the inns were filled. Then as Mary's time was close upon her after the journey, a man took pity on her and provided a cave used as a stable, there the travellers found shelter and rest.

That night Mary's labours came upon her and she suffered the pangs of childbirth and cried out in pain. Nearby, some shepherds were tending sheep, for in the midst of so many strangers these needed protection, and hearing her cry went to help. They provided a shepherd's basket which was filled with straw and placed it in the manger, and the newborn babe was wrapped in the clothes brought for him.

After eight days had elapsed the child was named Joshua, meaning 'One Who Delivers', for a spirit messenger of God had appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, "That which lies within Mary, your wife, is filled with the power of the Holy Spirit and will respond to the hopes of men." Later, men called Him Jesus, and because he fulfilled their hopes and was anointed with the power of the Holy Spirit He became acknowledged as the Christ.

Now, the stable was against a hill, behind an inn where sages from the East were staying, men of Sastera, wise in the Books of Heaven and of Nimrod who carried the cross of fire. So Joseph sent for them, requesting they come and foretell the child's future, for such was the custom.

One of the sages said, "It is strange indeed, for this child is born under no usual star, but under one a star in appearance only and not in nature, having a power not in other stars. He is destined for greatness and will motivate events touching the lives of all men."

When word of this was passed around there was much excitement among those belonging to the House of David, and many, remembering the prophesies of John, for they had passed

his way, wondered in their hearts, "Is this not He for whom we wait, the Consolation of the Jews and Deliverer of Men?" This displeased the people of Bethlehem who awaited another deliverer.

When the sages spoke of the matter at their journey's end in Jerusalem, and word came of the excitement among those of the House of David in Bethlehem, there was great consternation among the priests and learned men. They tried to discover where the babe was, but the sages answered deviously and also said, "His star points towards the East."

An elder of the House of David, attending the blessing of the child on the eighth day, lifted up his voice and declared, "Surely this is He who has been promised to redeem us out of the hands of evil. This is He upon whom the power of the Holy Spirit will descend, bestowing strength, compassion and wisdom. Surely, He will rule in the Kingdom of God."

When the king heard about these things, and that a babe had been born who, many claimed, was destined to be the Deliverer, he was greatly disturbed and summoned the Council. With the Council were learned scribes and elders who disputed among themselves concerning the babe. Some said that while God's Anointed would be born in Bethlehem, the Deliverer would not, for the birth of God's Anointed in that place had been foretold by the prophets. Others said it might not be more than an Enlightener who was expected to be born at that time. However, when many agreed that God's Anointed and the Deliverer might be the same person, the king sent three men to discover the child.

The dispute before the Council had been long and Joseph had been forewarned, so when the men sent by Herod came to Bethlehem Joseph had departed with his family. They went to the place where the kinfolk of Mary lived. The men who came did not search long for Jesus, for after the Council had been dismissed Herod slew the son who sat with him on the throne, as he had slain others of his blood. Later, Herod died himself, but after these happenings the Romans did not bestow the title of king on any Jew, and it was unlawful for any man to claim the title.

In this manner the prophesy was fulfilled which said, 'A

young woman shall give birth to a son, naming Him, Our Support in God. He will be the bearer of knowledge, discriminating between good and evil, but before this is given to the people the land will lose its kings'.

When time had passed Joseph and Mary came to Jerusalem and stayed at the house of a relative, a man strongly set against wrongdoing and well learned in the law. The forty days having been accomplished for the purification of Mary, she came to the temple and Joseph offered the prescribed sacrifice and dedicated the child.

Hearing from Joseph and Mary the things which the sages had foretold about the child Jesus, the devout man took the babe into his arms and praised God in this manner, "Because the things foretold have come about, your servant is prepared to depart in peace, for my eyes have been gladdened by the Deliverer of my people, a beacon light for others and the Glorifier of Your Name. He will teach all men the ways of God and how to walk in His paths, so swords shall be made into ploughshares and spears into billhooks, and peace will reign over men."

Joseph and Mary could not understand the meaning of this and asked what was meant, whereupon the man replied, "I hold a sappling which will grow into a sturdy tree, under the shade of which many nations will find peace. Yet He will also test the strength of our people, tearing them apart in dispute. He comes as a separator, dividing the sheep from the goats, showing each their rightful place. He will place a sword in the hands of the weak and strengthen them, and the ungodly will be smitten."

After complying with the requirements of the priestly law, Joseph and Mary returned with the infant to their home in Galilee, a small place in a hollow at the foot of a hillside. There the child grew up, developing a strong body and keen mind, for He was strangely talented. He was wise beyond His years and deft with his hands, and when old enough he began learning the craft of ploughmaking.

His parents, following the custom, went each year to Jerusalem for the Festival of Deliverance, and when Jesus was twelve they went as usual, but this time taking Him with them.

Having remained the seven days of the festival, Joseph and Mary set off to return home but let the boy linger in Jerusalem, for a kinsman of theirs was also returning and they thought Jesus was in his company.

Having gone a day's journey and finding Jesus was not with His kinsman, they became perturbed and at first light in the morning returned to Jerusalem. It was some time before they found Jesus in a small outside room of the temple, sitting before an instructor of the priestly law. His parents were astonished at finding Him accepted among learned men, and the teacher expressed amazement at the child's love of learning. But Mary scolded the boy for His inconsideration, saying, "We have suffered much during the search for you." Jesus replied, "Why search for Me elsewhere, knowing I must concern Myself with the work of the Spiritfather?" This saying disturbed the instructor.

Neither could His parents understand the meaning of the reply, but they took the boy away with them. Henceforth He always obeyed His parents, but Mary kept these things in the storehouse of her heart. As Jesus grew up His intelligence increased and He was well liked by all, but He was a solitary child much given to wandering.

Chapter Six

JOSEPH DIED when Jesus was a youth, at that time working as a craftsman among the Kenites.

After Jesus had been away a long time he returned to the house of His brothers. One day, while he worked under the shade of a tree they came to him and said, "Out in the wilderness by Jordan there is a man who cleanses people by immersion in water, he claims strange knowledge and calls himself the Forerunner. We are going to see what he teaches." Jesus said, "I have heard of these things and surely as the son of our forefather Jesse prayed to be cleansed of his secret faults and presumptions, the sons of our father should not stand aloof from cleansing. I will go with you."

The brothers of Jesus said, "This man is called John, he heralds the coming of an Enlightener who will be an allwise Instructor in Goodness. He himself does not bear this new light which will dispel the darkness in men's minds. He tells of One who will grant men the privilege of becoming Children of God, awakening to eternal life that part within them not born of earthly desires."

So Jesus and His brothers went out seeking John, finding him beside the Jordan, at the place of crossing where there was a pool. The hairs on the head of John were already white.

John, seeing Jesus among those gathered about him, said, "Look, all of you, here He is, a Man in whom there is no guile, the true Lamb of God, the One we await. For Sethel, sending me forth to baptise, instructed me thus: 'When you discover a man

worthy to be the receptacle of the Holy Spirit in abundance, the same shall you acknowledge as the Enlightener'."

Hearing these words, Jesus joined with those to be cleansed, but when He stood before the Forerunner in the water John said, "You have greater powers of cleansing than I, yet You come to me." Jesus replied, "The power to cleanse and revitalise with the spirit is not in men but in the spirit which fills man. It is important each should be allowed to do whatever he is called upon to do."

Jesus asked of John, "What do you know about Me?" John said, "Years gone by I had a vision of three Heaven lights and as the sun sank so they rose. A flame of fire went up over Jerusalem and smoke filled the temple, and a star fell down into Juda. The meaning I know, for it was this: The Deliverer is born and woe unto the house of Herod. Woe to you scribes and your interpretations of the law. The star that appeared and stood over Jerusalem was a child planted into Bethlehem from out of the heavenly heights, as was foretold, and it was prophesied He would be the Deliverer. The fire that burned was the fire of a strange altar."

"I prophesy great things for You, You are destined to become a true Son of God. Soon You will see the glory of Heaven revealed and the power of the Holy Spirit will be poured out upon You as a stream of pure water. The time has come to proclaim Yourself. Peace, peace on You whom our God has chosen as His Messenger, for You will proclaim the true gospel. Strengthen Your heart, for the road ahead is steep and stony. No man is hated so much as one who tries to point out defects in character and attitudes, and seeks to guide men along the path of right and beneficial living."

Then John took Jesus down to the river and baptised Him, and He was overshadowed by the Holy Spirit and became fully filled with its power. So His face glowed and the people wondered and were bewildered, for they did not understand; yet the face of their forefather Moses had also glowed after he had been in the presence of the Holy Spirit of God. John said, "Go and wait upon the mountainside nearby." Later John went to join Jesus and told Him that He was the Anointed One but should not yet make this

known to the people.

Then John prayed thus, "We give thanks, Most High God, with souls purified through realisation of our misdeeds and spirits reaching upward to commune with You. It is by Your power alone we have seen the light of Truth manifested and come to know the secret of Your Hidden Name. In humility we call You by the name of Father because you have shown us a father's compassion and kindness, and because we know you chastise and discipline us after the manner of a father. You have granted us freedom of activity, that we may enjoy the blessings of life. We have been saved by the waters of your affection. We approach You as the only Good and Great Being, asking only that we be united with You in the waters of the spirit and never become separated from the source of life."

This is how John testified concerning these events, "On that day the Spirit outflowing from God came with a great surge of power. I did not know this Man from others, but seeing Him I recalled what I had been told by those who gave me power to cleanse with water. They had said, 'When you find Someone so filled with the power of the Holy Spirit He can hardly contain it, you will know Him for one who will baptise with the cleansing power of the Holy Spirit'. I have experienced this power and testify that this Man is a True Son of God, the Enlightener and a Deliverer."

John left Jesus on the mountainside where He stayed three days fasting and communicating with the Powers Above, then He went back to the riverside. John was standing with two of his disciples, Jesus sitting apart, and John said to those with him, "There is the One giving Himself as an offering of God, the Enlightener of the world and the Deliverer of our people." Then the two disciples went to Jesus and said, "Tell us about Your teachings, shall we follow Your way or that of John?" Jesus said, "There is the way of the wilderness and there is My way, alike in teaching but calling to different men. What John teaches accords with the law even as My teaching, obey either or both, they are the law."

From that day forth Jesus had power to heal the sick and to

do many things, but He went out into the wilderness bordering Jordan, uncertain about his next move. While there, hungry and thirsty, He fought with Himself, resisting the temptation to go down among the habitations of men and use His powers for selfish ends. The same Spirit of God which overshadowed Jesus overshadowed the creation. It enlightens outer darkness and bestows life, and is eternal.

John was one of those who can see the spirits of men, and so he knew the nature of Jesus. These things took place at Batharaba which means the place of crossing.

Chapter Seven

COMING FROM THE WILDERNESS, Jesus still retained the full power of the Holy Spirit. Having it on trusteeship from God, He would not use it unworthily. At night it shone around Him like a pale blue haze; and though many have it, never has another manifested it in such strength.

Two followers of John the Forerunner, one being Andrew the brother of Simon, were sent by him to be with Jesus and accompanied Him to the Galilean Sea of the Gentiles. Early in the morning Andrew sought out his brother and said, "We have found the Deliverer," but at the time Simon thought another was meant. When Jesus had known Simon for two days He said, "You are strong, silent and steady, one likely to be ever steadfast in conflict, therefore you shall be called Peter." This meaning 'the Rock' in the tongue of the Gentiles, and from that day Simon became a follower of Jesus.

Passing along the shore they came upon the Town of Fishermen, and a boat was being unloaded by its owners. One who accompanied Jesus said, "Those are good men known to me." Then Jesus spoke to them while sharing a meal and later said, "Fishing is a good life, but there is a better one, follow Me and you will become fishers of men." So placing their boat in the keeping of others they followed Jesus.

At this time Jesus spoke with caution, for the people still recalled Judas the Galilean who had smitten the Romans in battle.

Jesus was a Man of long silences and many thought Him strange, but He taught all along the shore of the Galilean Sea and called others to follow Him. They worked wherever they could, for Jesus said, "What we offer is not to be sold like a common chattel and we will not take anything without giving value in return."

He healed many, saying, "It is not I but the power from above with Me." Some of the disciples said, "It is truly He who heals." But He did not cure all, for in some it created a disturbance, while many were not cured because this would have done them more harm than good. When asked, "How do You heal?" Jesus replied, "By the finger of God."

This is what the prophets had said regarding these things, "These are the words of God: 'I will restore you to health and heal your wounds. Be strong of heart and courageous, neither afraid nor dismayed, for I am with you always'."

About this time the disciples questioned Jesus concerning the World of Spirits wherein lay the Kingdom of Heaven, and He said, "It is like a flight of stairs leading from cellar to roof. They who enter the house are given a place on the stairs and may step downwards and back, but never up, though the stair above is not unknown to them. Those on the top stair are in glorious sunshine, while those at the bottom are in darkness and gloom."

A disciple said, "Many who do not come mock Your words." Jesus replied, "Dogs bite stones, not those who throw them." Someone asked, "Are You the Hammer of God, for all yearn for God's intervention, and when that comes will rejoice, saying, 'This is the day of the One God for which we have long waited'." Jesus answered, "There is a time for sowing and a time for reaping, everything to its appointed time."

Jesus gathered His followers around Him and taught as follows, "These days are a night of ignorance when all is dark, but I am the Light which will dispel the darkness. My Light will light your lamps, and you too will become bearers of the Light. I am the Light to point the way, and none can find the way to God except by the Light."

"I come to testify concerning the Father, for those following

My Way see God in the Light of the Father. Does not a father chastise in love and punish with affection? Does he not give you tasks only just within your power of accomplishment? Even as with an earthly father, so with the Heavenly Father who is infinitely greater. Being flesh we understand earthly ways, but the ways of God may also be known and understood, for His Spirit resides in all men."

"Be upright in faith yourselves and teach uprightness and Truth. Fear no man, especially the rich and powerful, for they live in servitude to their possessions and position. You must carry the Light to many, but few will be those who light the lamp of their lives from it. Do not covet riches, for though few men possess them, all who do are not free but are themselves possessed by their wealth. Because riches are the possession of a few, all seek them; even so are my words, were they possessed by all none would value them."

One said to Jesus, "Sire, we are not all like John who could surely eat bread made with sand, is there no easy way?" Jesus said, "The only easy paths in life lead nowhere, or are cut by others, but the path I point can be cut by none but yourselves."

"A pedlar going from place to place is willing to undergo the hardships incurred through his wandering, in order to earn his livelihood. Even so should you be prepared to cheerfully accept the hardships imposed by life, in order to gain glory in the life which follows. If a child is not raised with austerity, can it enjoy the pleasures of later life? Only the foolish parent overindulges the child, and if it is done in the name of affection the parent is either a hypocrite or irresponsible."

Now, close by was a well and the disciples were drawing water for drinking. Jesus called them over and said, "Do you find the water refreshing?" They replied, "Yes, we have drunk our fill and are refreshed." Jesus said, "Does any water remain in the well?" They replied "Sire, this well is inexhaustible and cannot be drunk dry by any number of men." Then Jesus said, "It is even so with my teachings, what I have revealed so far is but a small portion of the whole, yet it suffices for the present needs. The

people among whom we go are perverse and headstrong, and, like a thirsting ass, can be given only sufficient to ease their pressing need. If they say to you, 'This is beyond our understanding' or 'You have told us only in part', recall this well and the refreshing water you obtained from it."

One of the disciples asked, "How shall we judge what people do, whether it be good or whether it be bad?" Jesus said, "If you are unsure whether a person's actions be good or bad, incline in his favour. If anything may be interpreted favourably or otherwise, then interpret favourably. Do not seek for wrongdoing, like dogs chasing a foul smell. If a good man does something appearing to be bad, then withhold judgement, wondering whether there be some good motive behind it. Yet do not be easily hoodwinked; if one with a bad reputation does something seemingly good, question his motives, but bear in mind that no man is either wholly good or wholly evil."

Jesus said, "Fortify yourselves with the knowledge of Truth as I have imparted it to you. Rejoice in the knowledge that you stand within its everlasting light." The disciples said, "Sire, we are grateful for what You give us, we know each of us is a part of the Everlasting Spirit. We have truly found Truth and see it more clearly than others, we are children of the Light and of the Spirit, even as we are children of the Father. None of us can ever repay You, for we have been given treasure beyond riches; only the Heavenly Father can provide proper recompense for Your labours among men."

At this time Jesus was teaching His disciples at a place apart, for He was still wary of the people, but He and the disciples went among them to earn their bread. Jesus healed many, but to His disciples He said, "I have not come to strengthen the bodies of men but their spirits. For if man is wholesome in spirit he is wholesome in body. It is better to treat the man than the malady."

One day, a disciple returning from his labour said to Jesus, "Sire we work all day and scarcely sleep at night, yet when we tell of Your teachings we are abused and mocked by the people. Where is the benefit in this, should we not be treated otherwise?"

Jesus said, "When I was a boy the poor would gather about my mother's door, for she always had an extra loaf in the oven for them. One day, a beggar, having been fed often and now perhaps considering it his entitlement, found fit to scold her, for this day she was not well and therefore slow. She, not being used to this, began to weep."

"So I say unto you, do not let the talk of thoughtless tongue perturb you, for this is only a foretaste of what is to come. These things are refining processes of the spirit, therefore rejoice for the benefit rather than sorrow for the hurt. For when my mother cried, I said to her "Dry your eyes and be happy, for now you can perform your charitable acts to perfection. Had those who stood about the door praised you, the deed would have been less worthy, having been done for their praise and therefore not entirely out of charity. Many do good works because it increases their self-esteem, but charity is not giving the bone to a hungry dog but giving the meat when hungry yourself."

Andrew said to Jesus, "If we give all we have to the poor they will grow fat and slothful, preferring a life of beggary to one of toil." Jesus said, "Charity is giving a hand to a blind man or soothing the wounds of those smitten by the spirit-strengthening sword of life. It is good to help those in distress or those who cannot help themselves, but sometimes giving does more harm than good. Many give because it eases their conscience or raises their self-esteem, such giving is not goodness. But when giving entails self-sacrifice, then it is better to give than to receive, for the benefit lies in the sacrifice made and not in the thing bestowed."

"A rich man was going away, so he gave a purse of silver to each of his two servants so they could keep themselves while he was away. One servant spent the money on merchandise which he hawked around the city, and by being thrifty was able to recover the silver with sufficient over to buy a stall and then a shop. When the master returned he said to this man, "Such efforts should not go unrewarded," and made him a gift of the silver. The other servant, having the purse of silver began to spend it on pleasure and a life of ease, so when the master returned there was nothing

left. This angered the master after seeing how hard the other had toiled, so he demanded repayment of the silver, and when this could not be done enslaved the man."

"The improvident servant was unable to understand why the other has been given a gift and freedom, while he was enslaved for being unable te repay; why he who had money was given more. Yet I say to you, this is the way of the Father who gives trusteeship of Earth's bounty to His children. Likewise, they are given talents of spiritual gold which are greater than any earthly silver, but these many choose to bury in the ground. For them the day of accounting must surely come."

Jesus tarried long beside the waters, moving from place to place and teaching His disciples according to their understanding. Some were like strong, well-plastered cisterns holding water without leaking a drop, others could not retain all that was poured into them. Jesus taught each only in accordance with his capacity and some carried much more of His teachings than others.

One day, at eventide, Jesus said, "Because you are wearied and your task seems endless, do not despair. What you do may be likened to a man down by the shore whose master has set him the task of carrying water from the sea to fill a hole in the sand. The sea flows no less, neither does the land become flooded. When the master comes the man says to him, 'This is a fruitless task to which I can see no end', and the master replies 'It is one which grows easier with time and each day you are paid'."

"Two men, finding favour in the eyes of a king, were promised high positions in a distant city but had to find their own way. They set off together and stayed the first night at an inn where there were many attractions. One man spent the night in drinking and merriment; the other finding an experienced traveller who knew the road, kept it in his company. This second man learned that by going a particular way he would avoid a thick forest full of wild beasts; a turning would lead him away from a swamp, and others from a precipice and thorny thickets. He went to bed and awoke early, feeling refreshed, and went his way. The

other man, being heavy-headed and sluggish, started late in the day."

"The early starter, heeding all he had been told, came quickly to the city and enjoyed his rewards. The other became lost in the forest and was wounded by wild beasts. He wandered through swamps and fell down the precipice to die of weariness among the thickets. Now, the thick forest is ignorance, the swamps are delusions, the precipice the carnal desires which lure men to spiritual disaster, and the thorny thickets tribulation and suffering without which development is impossible. The experienced traveller is a disciple of the Light and the man who reaches the city one who listens to him."

The disciples said, "Sire, many people hear our words but how many take them to heart and benefit, we are trying to bail out the sea with shell." Jesus said, "Then you are learning patience and persistence in a good school. If a cloak is placed around a shivering man his body becomes warm and is comforted, but if it is placed around a boulder there is neither effect nor response."

"Though I have told you the days fly as though carried on the wings of swallows, do not act as though the day's labour is all important and must be completed within the day. Doing this you become less able to perform the task, for he who tries to reach out over the edge of his limitations falls into a pit and achieves nothing."

James, the disciple, said, "If a man of unlimited wealth says, "Come and count silver pieces from sunrise to sunrise and all the pieces counted will be yours, could the man counting be expected to sleep during the night?" Jesus replied, "A man having much wealth is unlikely to do anything without purpose, and this would be in the counting, could you count silver pieces from sunrise to sunrise and not make an error?"

Jesus said, "Let none among you take the handgrips of my plough unless he is prepared to grasp them firmly and cut a deep furrow. Let none of you walk behind it unless prepared for weariness and sweat. There is no easy way for the ploughman, the field is there and he must cultivate it furrow by furrow, if he is

slovenly the grain yield will be poor."

"Water drawn from the ground or falling from the sky will produce burning weeds and grass, but to produce bread to eat and wine to drink water from the brows of men must be added. Yet labour is not without its own reward, for the man who labours all day sleeps contentedly even though his pillow be a stone, while the sluggard sleeps without content even though he lie on a pillow of down."

Chapter Eight

LEAVING THE SEA OF GALILEE behind them Jesus took the disciples up into the mountains, and others went also. Here there was a house providing warmth and shelter, so they tarried awhile, it being the time of preparation for sowing.

One cold night Jesus went out from the room where they sat at food to relieve a man guarding the asses, so he might come in and warm himself. Later, when the man returned to his charges he found Jesus shivering, for He had placed His cloak around a foal. When the man said, "Sire, why do You do this? But seeing You have done it why does not our Father provide a mantle for His Son?" Jesus said, "The little one is helpless in our hands, but we are not helpless in the Father's hand. The foal has no choice but to remain in the stall, while I can choose to go or stay, to keep My covering or give it to another. If God voided the effects of our good deeds, what merit would they have?" The man said, "I will pray God to make me good even as You." Jesus said, "Pray that your deeds merit the reward of goodness."

Another night a journeyman came seeking shelter and warmth, and was given hospitality. He said to those who made him welcome, "You are fortunate indeed to live here in warmth and comfort, while I must ride the inhospitable roads for my master."

The following morning, having been well provided with sustenance for the road he said to Jesus ere he departed, "Sire, I

listened well to Your words last night. Since I am a poor man suffering many hardships and my life is difficult, am I then assured of better conditions in the life to come?" Jesus said, "By what standards do you think these things are judged? Using yours, the packhorse accompanying you would be more entitled to this assurance. For while you ate hot soup and slept in comfort and warmth, this uncomplaining beast whose lot is much harder than yours remained neglected in the cold."

Towards the end of their stay a learned man came to eat with them, one knowing all the Books of Wisdom and the law. While talking with the disciples he said, "Because of my knowledge I am a man of no mean position and many men are silent before me when weighty matters are under discussion." Jesus, overhearing this said, "Take no credit for yourself concerning your knowledge, but compare yourself to a borrower who has a debt to repay. Does the borrower receive credit for repaying what he has borrowed? Therefore, take no credit for the wisdom you dispense, and as to the acquisition of knowledge, is this not the end for which you were created?"

When this man had departed Jesus said to His disciples, "The Books of Wisdom should be the treasure of all men, for they contain the explanations and instructions of God. When men say, 'Woe because I am smitten with misfortune, why does God let disaster strike in this manner, or why is my lot in life unlike that of others?', be sure they have not unlocked the door of their treasurehouse."

"By reading the Books of Wisdom you will be brought to an understanding of the nature and intention of God, and life will then have meaning and purpose. Without them you can be likened to a man at sea in a fair wind but lacking sail and oars. Reading them but lacking guidance or understanding you could be likened to a man at sea with sail and oars but without the ability to utilise them."

A disciple, one who had been with John, asked, "Sire, tell us which is true. John taught the way of the wilderness and said, 'Be the best of men and let God take care of His Kingdom, for you are

the rulers of Earth.' Yet at other times he told us to await the coming of One who would deliver us from the evils of this world and show us the path of righteousness" Jesus said, "If you knew a distinguished guest was coming, would you not make fitting preparations, doing all things to ensure an appropriate welcome? If a man has many servants, does he thrash his own grain?"

"The road indicated by John is not My road, but it leads to the same destination. I bring you the Way of the Cross, which is the cross of life. Follow what I teach and you will be with Me at the end. Choose your path for no man can plough two furrows, neither can the hands of two men hold the reins."

While Jesus was still in the mountains preparing His disciples for the task ahead, two wandering musicians came by and one was always laughing and the other always melancholy. Jesus said to them, "Many men have differing skills, and are you not skilled with the lute and lyre?"

They said, "That is so." Jesus said, "Now, when the strings of your instruments are too taut, what happens?" They replied "Then there is discord," and Jesus said, "Is it not even so if the strings are too slack?" They replied, "It is." Jesus said, "Sometimes the natures of men need slackening, for they are too taut, while sometimes they are to slack. Be like your instruments, always tuned to the right note, and let there be harmony between you."

One of the disciples said to Jesus, "Sire, You tell us many things and I cannot retain all Your words, surely some are better than others. Which should I store in my heart?" Jesus said, "A king had two castles, one at each end of a wall guarding his kingdom, and he gave each of his two sons command over a castle. When word came that an enemy approached he ordered his sons to collect all kinds of provender and store it. One son collected everything he could, but the other took only what he considered the best, leaving everything else. The enemy came and both castles were besieged. The castle of one son fell when its supplies were exhausted, but the other held out by utilising what the other had rejected. So it is with My words, even those which may seem of least value may one day prove their worth."

The disciple then said,"Tell us where we may find God and Truth." Jesus said, "You have the Holy Books and My words." Turning to the others he said, "This man is like a beggar who all his life stood under a fig tree. More than anything else he desired to be rich, but he remained always poor and dressed in rags. Like all men he came to his hour, and those who buried him dug his grave at the place where he had spent his life. When the earth under the tree was opened up it exposed a treasure of great prize; gold and jewels, right under the spot where he had been begging. How easy it would have been for that man to be rich!"

One of those to whom Jesus spoke said, "Then all we have to do is to read and listen, assimilating the knowledge gained." Jesus said, "There is danger even in this. Consider a snakecatcher who, going among the rocks sees a snake well worth catching but in his haste grabs it by the tail instead of behind the head, so it turns and bites him, causing his death. Did he die because of his calling or because he grabbed the snake wrongly? Was he not wrong in his approach rather than in what he did? It is even so with those who know the Holy Books from end to end but handle them wrongly."

Jesus said, "Be humble in your knowledge and not puffed up, but beware the snare of false humility." One said to Him, "Sire, what is false humility?" Jesus said, "A man was once told that if he could learn humility he would become perfect, and desiring perfection in himself above all else he diligently studied everything relating to humility. Then there was nothing about it he did not know. However, one day a man said to him, 'What has your humility gained for you, where have you benefited?' To which the supposedly humble man replied, 'Stupid one, what is the matter with you, for can you not see that having learned humility I am now a perfect man'?"

About this time Jesus came upon two disciples arguing as to which of His teachings should be retained in their hearts. Jesus said, "Your argument can be likened to two wives, one old and one young. The old one kept pulling out the dark hairs on her husband's head, while the young one kept pulling out the white

hairs. So he became bald, having no hair at all, then both women said, 'Behold we have a baldheaded husband'.

One day a disciple who had been to buy provisions returned, saying, "I took down a diligently prepared book of sayings delightful to the ear, but men took it from me and tore it apart, surely the wrath of God will strike them." Hearing this Jesus called the man to Him and said, "A girl once diligently collected colourful seeds and threaded them into a necklace, but when she put it on a youth came along and pulled it scattering the carefully gathered seeds. She ran to her father expecting him to chase the youth and chastise him, but the father did nothing. Later that evening he gave her a beautiful necklace of rare gems which he had bought earlier, intending to surprise her. Then she knew why he had not bothered with the youth or been concerned about the necklace of seeds."

Jesus said to those about Him, "Many things befall you, and life is difficult, but so life is meant to be. Only timber well seasoned is fit for the carver's hand. A carpenter once sent his two sons to the forest to cut timber and they came upon a mighty tree, one without branches, going straight up with sound wellgrained wood. One son said, this tree is too big, the task of cutting it too difficult, let us find another which is easier to deal with. The other said, 'No, let us take only the best', but the first one goes further into the forest and comes upon a tree partly rotten and soft. Now, he with the rotten timber returns first, while the other comes two days later."

"If the carpenter be wise he rejects the timber brought in first and chastises his son, rewarding the other when he returns. But if the carpenter be pleased with the first son's early return, accepting the timber and building with it, placing it as a beam support so the upright post breaks and the beam falls killing a man, how shall the blame be apportioned? The easy way is rarely the best."

Jesus said, "Fear not the hostility of men nor the wiles of the world, rise above your conditions. Be like the waterlily which rises out of the mud, up through the murky waters into the sunlight above. Strive always to rise above your circumstances, for in

striving you gain strength. The man whose path through life has been easy is never as good a man as one whose path has been difficult. Life has two purposes only: to test and teach, and for that Earth is perfect."

"Regard each other as brothers, cherishing in sickness and supporting in trouble. Never praise yourself, and if you have virtues let others discover them. Be careful with whom you associate, for if a man enter a tannery, though he carry nothing away a bad smell will accompany him. No man is so important that he is above the need to work. If it becomes necessary to dress hides in the marketplace, then undertake it with a cheerful heart. Even the rich must do something, for idleness is the rust of time."

"Judge no man otherwise than you would wish to be judged. Once a young woman was carried off and placed in a whorehouse in another country. Her father sent two men to ransom her, and when they came to the whorehouse one remained outside while the other went in. When he who went in came out, he said to the other, 'What do you think I was doing in there?' The other replied, 'Why, negotiating the woman's ransom'. Even so should you judge with the scales weighed down favourably."

Jesus taught His disciples thus, "All things a man possesses, his talents and his skills are gifts bestowed by the grace of God. The inheritance received by anyone should be regarded as something received in trust, and it is true that if they deal with it wrongfully or selfishly payment will be required. One of the greatest of life's tests is the challenge of wealth or position, and few are those who successfully meet it. Therefore, do not envy those with wealth and position unless they deal with them wisely; otherwise pity them, for they have failed to rise above their test."

"A wayfarer once came to an inn, and finding no one there went into the eating hall where he found a table set with all good things, many kinds of food and drink. So he sat down and helped himself, thinking 'No one else is here, so all this must be mine, and if mine I can do with it as I please'. However, when the innkeeper returned from where he had been the wayfarer could not escape the accounting."

"The rich are responsible for providing the needs of the poor, whether by work or food. This above all is the prime responsibility of wealth, and if a rich man say this he cannot do, then his riches witness against him. For if a poor man have a loaf of bread, he will share it with he who has none, and a beggar at the door of a poor man receives better treatment than he does at the doors of the rich. Yet the rich have the most to give, and this is the sin of the wealthy."

"Riches of themselves are not sinful, it is what they make of men that brings them into ill repute. If they were properly regarded as something permitting the possessor to study the Books of Wisdom and to redress the wrongs of the poor, then they would serve a good end. Let the rich ask themselves with sincerity, 'Am I not wealthy because of my lack of charity and the exploitation of others? Is it not because I love myself more than my neighbours?'"

"It is dangerous to be near a man without wisdom. He is like a tree with many fine branches but few roots; the winds of adversity blow and he is uprooted. Choose your friends with great care, measuring them against the words of wisdom. The man who is himself a good friend will never lack friends, but those who think they have many friends have none. The loneliest person is one living for himself alone, but it is better to be lonely than to be in bad company."

Jesus said, "It is not unseemly to glory in your strength, but never become vain, for in strength you are not superior to the beasts. If the standard is to be the ability to bear a heavy burden, an ass can carry more than any of you. An elephant is mightier than a score of men, while a camel has more stamina than any man. Strength and stamina are goodly things, seen in their right perspective, but they can be a heavy handicap on the path of spiritual development, particularly if they lead to arrogance and inconsideration for others. Strength, like riches are knowledge, is a goodly thing of itself if properly utilised, but for most the test is too great."

Some disciples came to Jesus and asked whether they should not withdraw into the wilderness where they would dedicate their

lives to God. Jesus said, "Of what use would My teachings be in the wilderness, are you going to save rocks from sin or convert camels? Will you enlighten the wind or give wisdom to mirages? Where is the benefit if what you learn cannot be put into practice? Learning and good conduct must go hand in hand, and the greatest wisdom is that which teaches men to live in harmony. They who seek to escape the tests and trials of life are cowards. Are you going to withdraw from the conflict through lack of courage, standing silently by while the wicked swallow up the good?"

The disciples said, "Sire, are You bringing strife or peace, do You prepare us for battle? Are we to rally the people?" Jesus said, "Do you still not understand, I am a man of peace and I unsheath only the sword of the spirit. This is not the easy way, for it is less difficult to change things with the sword than with soft words, and those who oppose us understand that better. But let only those who would use weapons with courage talk about soft words and peace, otherwise better men will justifiably scorn them as cowards. Cowards talk about peace and brave men about war, but I tell you that when brave men talk peace and cowards are sent to war, there will be no more strife and a new day will dawn."

A disciple named Maciah said to Jesus, "Sire, teach us how to love one another without malice or envy, with goodwill and forbearance." Jesus said, "The first step is to love yourself less, and by doing this you will find more love to give. If any say, 'I like being loved', that person is wrong, for rather you should say, 'I like loving'. Do not seek to take love but to give it, for have I not said it is better to give than to receive."

Another disciple who had believed in bodily resurrection said, "Sire what proof can be given that there is a life beyond the grave?" Jesus answered, "There is proof to those worthy of it, but if it was a manifest certainty as a reward for a good life, how would the hypocrites and those who would do nothing without payment be discovered? If uncertainty and doubt were removed from life, then it would be of less value for its purpose. Things are as they are because so they must be. If you want proof become

worthy of it, you will not be denied it even here. But you must seek diligently, nothing comes easily and this least of all."

Before they departed from that place a disciple said to Jesus, "Sire now we go to take up our burdens tell us how to avoid wrongdoing." Jesus said, "Were you able to avoid all wrongdoing and sins, such is the known frailty of men that I fear you would fall into another one, that of false pride. Look at the falsely pious ones who glory in their righteousness, and this is not the least of sins."

Having taught in this manner and said these and many other things, Jesus departed from that place on the mountainside and went down to carry the tidings concerning the coming Rule of God to the people.

Chapter Nine

JESUS WENT WITH HIS DISCIPLES into Juda and taught there. At this time John of the Wilderness, who heralded the coming of Jesus, was baptising at Ainum, not far from Salim, because there was a plentiful supply of water in that place. A great number of people came to be cleansed in the waters, for John was still free.

At this time there was much disturbance in Samaria and many soldiers were coming and going, for a false deliverer had arisen and proclaimed himself as God's Anointed. The people were restless and there were many rumours, but John had no dealings with any of these things. Yet some said the false deliverer was a follower of John, but this was untrue.

When the disciples of John came to him and said, "Respected teacher, some time ago you testified concerning a Man who came to you on the other side of the river, now He has started to baptise and His teachings gather many men to Him." John said, "No man can speak with authority concerning God without His sanction, but this Man I know to be a True Messenger and a Worthy Son." They said, "He also heals." John replied, "No man can heal except through the power of the Holy Spirit, and this Man has that power. I have said I am not the Chosen One, neither am I any Other whom men seek, I am the forerunner sent to herald His coming. The bride belongs to the bridegroom, but he who stands at the bridegroom's right hand to support him is pleased when he hears the words

spoken by the bridegroom. That pleasure is now mine, but not for long, for as my star declines so His waxes brighter."

John feared no man and condemned hypocrisy and indifference to the law wherever he found it. He was the rod of the poor and unlearned, and a staff to the weak and oppressed. He was incorruptible and spoke forthrightly, never hiding anything within his heart, and condemned wrongdoing wherever it occurred.

Now, John baptised with water and because of this the priests were against him, but on this matter they could do nothing. However, John had condemned the actions of Herod who had sinned against his blood and the law, and because of this the people murmured against Herod. Therefore, as these were restless times and the people were in a mood for revolt, he had John taken and imprisoned. For had there been a rising against Herod at this time Rome could not have come to his aid.

John was imprisoned in a fortress and this pleased Herodius, for she had long borne illwill towards him. Though Herod had no lawful right to take his brother's wife, the fault was not his alone. Herodius wished with all her heart to rid herself from the condemnations of John, but could not accomplish this because Herod held John in awe, for he was a truly holy man much beloved by the people. Though John was kept in confinement Herod often spoke with him and listened to his words, but though they stirred the heart of Herod he found them difficult to understand.

While in prison, doubt stirred in the heart of John and he sent disciples to Jesus, enquiring whether He felt He was truly God's Anointed, for at this time there was much confusion on these matters. When the disciples returned, their reply puzzled John, for they reported Jesus as saying, "I am not He whom you expected, or the Deliverer of these people, but a Deliverer of all men; nevertheless, if only another will change the hearts of the people I shall not be found wanting." But John received enlightenment and knew he had not erred.

Now, a certain feast day came and Herod entertained his

officials and the leading men of Galilee, and during the course of the entertainment his daughter danced for the guests. She so charmed and delighted them that Herod, while under the influence of wine and the urgings of others, being also full of pride at their applause, swore to grant her any boon, whatever it entailed.

The girl withdrew to consult her mother who told her to request the head of John. Though the request greatly upset Herod and sobered him because he realised the extent of his folly, he himself could not break an oath of this sort made in the presence of his guests. The oath sworn was a kingly one, but Herod was not a king. Therefore, he put it to one of the guests, a learned man, as to whether anything he wished to do would have force within the law, or whether he could only be bound by an oath made within the law. The man replied that even kings were bound by the law, and though Herod was less than a king, he had sworn a kingly oath, which, if broken would confirm his lack of kingly authority. However, he said that John, being a lawbreaker, could not be protected by the law and so the oath made by Herod stood. So on the morrow the head of John was struck off and displayed at the gate.

So it was that John was put to death because Herod feared his influence over the people, for he declared the coming of a New Kingdom and Herod feared the day of deliverance. John had said, "I have been sent with many powers, I am with you to point out the way of the law, I herald the Deliverer and the Rule of God."

John had taught his disciples to pray in this manner, "Holy be the name of the Most High God in the places He created to serve His will. Let the coming of the New Kingdom under the Rule of God not be delayed beyond our days, but come in the time which is at hand."

When the followers of John heard what had happened they took charge of the body of John and laid it in a tomb by the river. There was a loud outcry from the people who said, "Why should our prophets be treated in this manner, where is the Deliverer?" Later, when Jesus returned to the river He found two followers of John and took them to a place of safety.

Chapter Ten

BEFORE GOING OUT among the people to declare Himself, Jesus returned to Genesareth, the town of His upbringing, accompanied by His disciples. He went first to the place where His mother was staying, and though she greeted Him warmly because she loved her eldest son, Mary did not fully understand Jesus. She always knew He would grow up to be different and would become a Man of God, because when carrying Him she dreamed that a bright flaming star had come down from Heaven and entered her womb.

His own kinfolk had once thought Him mad and sought to take control of Him, but now, His brothers and sisters having grown up they no longer troubled Him. They had said, "He has lost His father and seeks another, for is it not written, 'I will be His Father and He will be My Son?'"

When younger, Jesus had been overawed by the prospects of the future and often fearful that He might not fulfil the promise, but He overcame this and any fears of His inability. It is in this and His dedication that His greatness was revealed.

Though Jesus tapped the Holy Spirit of God and in Him it was stored up as in a watertank, He still had to overcome the weaknesses of men, for without so doing His greatness could not be made manifest. Those who say He was something other than man detract from His greatness, for then the things He had to do would have been easier to accomplish. Perhaps they cannot

comprehend the heights to which men can rise when inspired by God, the Father of all men.

Going into the temple, Jesus stood up to read as He had often done in holy days. He read out a passage from the scroll of a prophet to the Jews, called Isiah in the tongue of His fathers, and having done so returned it to the scrollkeeper and sat down.

After others had performed their duties, Jesus had a chance to speak, and with all eyes upon Him He did so, and the people were astonished. For he said, "Behold, you are witnessing the fulfilment of the Holy Writ and the accomplishment of God's design. I am chosen to be the tongue of the Father, speaking His words to you His people. I am a light shining in the midst of darkness, and even as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, so do I come to show how the good are to be separated from the wicked."

Jesus spoke with knowledgeable authority, bringing a new message which gladdened the hearts of those who heard Him. The people marvelled and whispered among themselves, "Where has He gained all this knowledge, how has He become so learned? Is this not the son of Joseph the carpenter who is now dead and of Mary, and do not His sisters live here still? Yet they say He has healed the incurable." But not all received His words in this manner and many were offended.

Noticing the murmuring among these, Jesus addressed them, saying, "Do you hold it against Me that I left? If a man has two duties he must make a choice, not following the inclinations of his heart but the course indicated by higher decree. No doubt you have heard about the things I have done elsewhere, and will say, 'Let us see You do the same here'. To this I can answer with sincerity, a prophet is unacceptable in his own neighbourhood, and a physician is not called to cure those who know him. When I come in friendship and compassion to those who need My help, they say, 'Physician heal Yourself first', thinking Me mad. Why now should I be called upon to do things Elijah and Elisha could not do, the only ones they cured were Syrians." Jesus did not heal many here, and He said, "I heal in accord with the law and not against it."

After hearing what He said in the temple, many people were vexed with Him and sought to hustle Him out of town. But others said, "Let Him be, for He grew up here and is only the son of a carpenter, therefore He tries to make Himself important. He has been away and seeks to impress us."

Being so poorly received in the town where he had been brought up, Jesus went out around the villages. Choosing twelve envoys from among His disciples he sent them away in pairs to deal with many things caused by the intrusion of evil. He said to them, "Carry a staff but take no food, no money and no change of clothing. When you are invited to a house, stay there until you leave the village, but never tarry where you are not welcome."

Jesus said, "Many will fail to grasp your meanings or will interpret your words wrongly. Do not dispute with them, but put things right with patience. Never disregard a questioner or abuse him, lest others think you have no answer. All can only grasp what you say according to their understanding, therefore speak plainly and to their hearts."

Jesus Himself went about proclaiming the advent of the Rule of God and He also cured many kinds of sickness. Then people began to say, "This Man is great and good even among those dedicated to the service of God," and many heeded His teaching and led a new life.

Now, many people believed there would be two kinds of deliverers, and a man named Joseph Baraban had many followers. Jesus met him at a house in Bethgal and said, "Why do you declare things which stir up the people?" To which the other replied, "What concern is it of Yours" Jesus answered him after this manner, "Several men were sitting in a boat, and one began boring a hole beneath his seat; seeing this, his companions said, 'What are you doing there?' He answered, 'What concern is it of yours what I do beneath my own seat?' and they replied, 'Surely it is our affair when what you do will swamp the boat and we will all be thrown into the water'."

Jesus moved to another place and a crowd gathered around Him, and while He was speaking one of His first followers tried

to push through to Him. Now, this man was deformed and ugly, his eyes squinted and he was ungainly, but he walked in the light of Truth. The crowd jostled him, shouting, "Look at the ugly man, push him back or he will scare the Teacher away."

Then Jesus stepped down from where He stood and, pushing through to the man put an arm around his shoulders, greeting him affectionately. Jesus said to the people, "Why mock someone in whom the light of goodness shines? What matters the appearance of the body when the spirit within is bright? None among you has a spirit such as this man's, beautifully glowing with goodness."

"This I say to you, the body is of little importance, for it perishes at its hour, but the spirit never dies. Why do you treasure that which you can keep but a short while, for soon it will be cast off like a worn out tunic. Surely, it is better to treasure more lasting things. The shell of a pearl is ugly and rough, but men do not seek it out for itself, wanting only what it contains, and this becomes the cherished treasure of a beautiful woman. Never heed the external ugliness, seek for the beauty within."

In the crowd there was a man who employed many others, and he said, "Sire, I am so stirred up by Your words that I will give up everything I have and follow You." Jesus said, "How many look to you for food and employment?" The man replied, "My children are numerous and I have many servants, and there is my father who is old." Jesus said, "The lives of no two men are alike and all require the labours of many to support them, even the greatest teachings cannot satisfy empty stomachs. Therefore, return to the place of your appointed labours and remain constant in your responsibilities, give all you make over your modest requirements to God and study the Holy Books daily."

Jesus said, "A man without the light places his faith in gold, burying it in the ground so it will support him in adversity. Yet what benefit does it bestow if he never needs it? He worries continually and must be constantly on guard lest he be robbed, and when he dies his inheritors spend it. Yet by charitable deeds and self-restraint a greater treasure which cannot be taken by robbers or dissipated by others can be laid up openly and without fear."

Someone in the crowd said, "Great Teacher, to some you say, give up all, while to others you tell to continue in their ways. I have many responsibilities and a moderate surplus over my requirements. What should I do?" Jesus said, "Do what is right and just, study the Books of Wisdom and live according to their teachings, exploit no one and work for the Rule of God."

A man said to Jesus, "Sire, I know the problems of the rich, for I have sons and many friends, but how can I know whether they love me or my wealth?" Jesus said, "A rich man owned a large warehouse, but one night this burned down, consuming all his wealth, and though he had given other warehouses to each of his two sons, when he lost his own they would not help him. While poor he met a beggar boy whom he adopted to fill the empty places in his heart and, going to a distant city, by hard work he established another warehouse, becoming rich again. When the adopted boy grew up the man gave him a warehouse, but one much smaller than those he had previously given to his sons."

"The two sons heard about their father's new wealth and sent word that they wanted to combine their warehouses with his, so that by trading together they could all get richer. The man then sent messengers to all three of those he had helped, saying his business had declined and he was in the hands of moneylenders and required a hundred pieces of gold to continue. The two sons returned excuses, saying they could not help, but the adopted son sent two hundred pieces of gold, saying he had pledged himself to obtain it. Thus the man found out who loved him and left all his estate to the one he had adopted."

Speaking to the people about Him Jesus said, "So long as the great sun never shone upon Earth, there was darkness, and had it not come to shine there would be darkness still. Without the sun men would not have known day from night; but when it came, both were made distinguishable. These times are a night of ignorance wherein wrongdoing and bewilderment prevail, but a light has come to dispel the darkness and make right distinguishable from wrong."

After these things had been done and said it was the time of

a Jewish festival, and Jesus returned to where there was a place of assembly. On the way he passed through the market where sheep were sold, beside which was a salt pool having a covered entrance to shelter the sick and maimed. A man was lying nearby and Jesus said to him, "How long have you been here?" The man replied, "I have been here a long time, having no one to put me into the water at the proper times." Jesus took pity on the man and, taking him by the hand, raised him up, saying, "You are cured, arise, take your bed and depart."

This happened on the Sabbath and when some pious Jews saw the man carrying a burden, they rebuked him, but he answered, "The Healer who came and cured me said I should take up my bed, so where am I in the wrong?" The pious Jews enquired regarding the Healer, but the man said he did not know Him, having never seem Him before. Later, when the man who had been cured saw Jesus outside the place of assembly he learned His name and told the Jews.

Before this, the pious ones who were separated out from the people had ignored Jesus, but now because He did such things on the Sabbath they turned against Him. For Jesus said, "If My Father does not rest, why should I?" They thought He claimed closer kinship with God than ordinary men, but He meant to show that all men are brothers.

The next day, when Jesus commenced speaking to the people many sought to do Him harm, and He said, "You have the teachings of the law and the prophets, why do you seek to do Me harm?" Then they shouted back at Him, "Because you are possessed by demons. You tell us we are wrong, but we are content with our ways. Leave us to go our way and You go Yours."

After this Jesus went away because of the hostility towards Him, but when it came close to harvesting time His brothers sent a messenger, saying, "Come back now, the people are busy at work, let Your followers here see for themselves the things You do, for if Your message is important the bearer should not remain hidden."

On His way back Jesus and the disciples with Him passed through Samaria where there was a place called Jacob's Well, five

furlongs from Sichem. The sun being at its height, they decided to rest there. After refreshing themselves the disciples went into the town to buy food, leaving Jesus reclining not far from the well.

Now, while Jesus rested there a Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus, not having a vessel, asked her for a drink. This surprised the woman, for the Jews regarded anything handled by the Samaritans as being defiled. She said, "How can You ask this of me?" Jesus replied, "If you knew what God gives through Me you would have requested a draught from the waters of life." The woman said, "What is this water of life? Surely, it cannot bestow greater benefit than this well, the gift of our forefather, which provided water for him, his household and his flocks." Jesus said, "This water, originating on Earth, can satisfy only body, and the drinker will thirst again. But the water I can provide, springing from an eternal source, satisfies any who drink so they need never thirst again for things not of this world, and it grants everlasting life in glory."

The woman said to Jesus,"Let me have this water You talk about, so I am freed from the necessity for drawing water." Jesus said, "It would be best if you went and brought your husband, for two may understand better than one." She answered, "But I have no husband." Jesus said, "In this you have at any rate spoken true, for though married five times you now live with one who is not your husband."

The Samaritan woman said to Jesus, "Sire I can see You are One of those special people who know all things; now tell me, is it true what Your people tell us, that we should worship in the temple at Jerusalem to reach the ear of God, for He is only there and not on Mount Gerasim." Jesus told her, "Be assured the time is coming when the place of worship is unimportant, for though your people worship without understanding the nature of worship, while the Jews worship with this knowledge, neither know the true nature of worship. The time is coming when all who understand the nature of worship will do so in spirit and in the light of Truth. For God is the Greatest of spirits and His worshippers must therefore bring something of the spirit. This,

and labour in His service, is the only acceptable kind of worship, the smoke of flesh, and fowl, are not acceptable offerings."

The woman heard without understanding, but one with Jesus stored these things in his heart. The woman said, "Some day an Enlightener will come and explain these things to us." Jesus replied, "My words may have come from the Enlightener Himself." The woman said, "I must go, for You frighten me."

Just as she was preparing to go, the disciples returned and were surprised to find Jesus had been talking to a Samaritan woman in this manner, but they said nothing. Leaving her pitcher, the woman hastened away to spread word around that there was a Man out at Jacob's Well who could read the past and might be the Enlightener, for the Samaritans did not wait the deliverer as did the Jews.

When the woman had gone the disciples showed the things they had brought to Jesus, but He was disinclined to eat, saying to them, "Doing the will of God sustains Me and the inflowing power of His Spirit quenches My thirst." One of the disciples said, "It is well to eat now, for the harvest is ripening over there and the harvesters need strength." Jesus said, "The reapers cannot expect their pay until the crop is gathered into the storehouse. Let us wait to measure the fruits of our labour before celebrating. Is it not written, 'Where one man sows another reaps?' You will be reapers in fields sown by others, many have toiled in the preparation of the ground and have sown good seed. You must be no less diligent in reaping the harvest, gathering it in carefully so not a grain is lost."

The one who had remained with Jesus said, "Sire, I am puzzled, this woman had many husbands, tell us which one will be her husband in Heaven." Jesus said, "In Heaven there is neither marriage nor giving in marriage, for there the promises of marriage are fulfilled. To one she must incline more than towards the others, and if he inclines likewise there is union of the spirit, but unions of the spirit may be either weak or strong."

Another disciple said, "What of he who is not her husband?" Jesus answered him, "Marriage is not of the flesh, nor made by

the words of men. It is of the spirit and they who are joined in spirit and flesh in the sight of God let no man seek to lightly put apart. A marriage wholly of the flesh is fornication, though it be blessed by many priests."

"Yet marriage is the measure of value, a thing possessed by many is of little consequence. The worth of a coin lacking inscription is unestablished, and the possessor carries it without faith, doubting its ability to buy his bread. A woman may be reserved for marriage or give herself freely for love, she knows her own worth best, but if she gives herself to several, then it is not love but fornication."

"A union is blessed before a priest and sanctified in the eyes of the people, but I tell you, unless the bond is forged on the anvil of adversity and wrought under the hammers of stress and struggle, it is a thing of little spiritual substance."

"Love is not like the thistleseed, blown this way or that according to the prevailing winds of desire and inclination. It is not the offspring of flesh, but the sunchild of the spirit. It can be proven and established only under difficulties and tribulations, and it is because of the known frailties of men under trial and test that marriage has been ordained to enshrine it."

Now, after these things were said many Samaritans came and heard the words of Jesus and invited Him to stay among them, and He remained three days.

Chapter Eleven

JESUS THEN WENT BY BOAT and where He landed there was a man who lived in a deserted tomb, because he was tormented by an intrusion from the kingdom of dark spirits. Attempts had been made to confine him in fetters, but because of the strength unnaturally given he easily escaped. Day and night he would shriek among the tombs and upon the hillside, terrifying people and often injuring himself by falling.

Jesus knew the nature of the tormenting thing and called upon the power within Him, so it entered the body of the possessed man, wrestling with the evil thing inside him. Then the man ran screaming among a herd of swine and two fell into a ravine, but shortly the man became calm, for the evil intruder had departed from him.

The swineherds ran away to carry the tale of these events to people round about who came to see for themselves what had happened. When they saw the mad man was rational they became afraid and asked Jesus to go away. When Jesus was preparing to depart the man who had been cured begged to go along with Him, but Jesus said, "No, you remain here and bear witness for Me." The man spread the tale of what had been done for him through all the free cities, for he received much silver in the market places.

Coming close to another town on the seashore where a crowd had gathered to hear Him, Jesus saw Matthew seated where dues were collected, and He said to him, "Are you ready to follow

Me?" for He had spoken with Matthew before. Matthew replied, "I am ready, but first come and eat with me."

When Jesus arrived at Matthew's house he found other tax gatherers had assembled there, with many others who did not observe the laws of Moses which are in the Holy Books of the Jews. While eating, Jesus said, "No man of himself can know right from wrong, for what is right in one man's eyes may be wrong in another's, therefore strife arises among them. Only when men accept a single standard of judgement and abide by it can there be peace. When men live together without the light of the law they are like a house built with unmortared bricks, or like men trying to tow a boat but all pulling in different directions."

"There are two laws; the law of men and the Law of the Father who is in Heaven. When I speak of the law I do not mean the law of men. I am the Light illuminating God's law so men see it more clearly, and though I fulfil the law I do not change it. Never say, 'This is right or that is wrong', but only 'This is right or wrong according to the law and in the Light of Jesus'. I bring new oil for the lamp of the law, for that within it is now impure and the light produces too much obscuring smoke. For I am the Son of Man and bear the sufferings of men, coming to fulfil their hopes even as it has been foretold. Is it not said, among the Jesseneth, that the Son of Man is the perfected man who will set the standard for those who wish to be true Sons of God?"

Later, when Jesus went outside he found some Perushim standing apart, as was their custom, and one put the question to Jesus, "How can You claim to be a Teacher interpreting the laws of God when you associate with tax gatherers and lawbreakers?" Jesus replied, "It is not the healthy who need the attentions of a physician, but those who are ill. It is the tree growing out of the sand which requires watering, not the one growing by the river. I come to minister to the spiritually sick, not to the righteous who have their consolation."

A man in the crowd said, "This is a day of fasting kept by all who are truly religious, yet here are You and your disciples eating and drinking." Jesus said, "Is it usual for attendants at the bridal

bower to deprive themselves of pleasure while the bridegroom is with them? Soon he will depart and that is the time for hearts to be heavy. A heart weighed down without cause is an unnecessary burden, adding neither joy nor benefit to the lives of men. Fasting is good, but when it becomes a routine religious rite it is no more than a purposeless vexation."

A soldier in the crowd asked Jesus, "Do You uphold the teachings of John of the Wilderness, for there was a man I can understand." Jesus replied, "John sent men to Me enquiring whether I was the Promised One or should they look for another. I said, 'Go back and inform John of all the things you have heard and seen here, and how the poor are learning about the coming of the Rule of God and the disinherited told when justice will reign'."

"People went out into the wilderness expecting to find a great man, but what had they in mind? A man speaking like the prophets of old or a nobleman clad in garments of fine linen? John dressed in a manner fit for the place and purpose, and he spoke in accordance with the message he had to convey. He was the man of whom the Holy Books speak, a voice of one crying in the wilderness, preparing the path for One who follows. I tell you with all sincerity, no mother ever gave birth to a better man than John, yet when the Rule of God comes everyone living will have to exceed him. Ever since John declared these things he was harried with violence, even though all the prophets before him foretold present events. He spoke with the voice of Elijah and if any of you have the understanding, you will know what I mean."

"Concerning this generation, which is wrapped up within itself and blind to all going on about it, there is little to say. It is like children at play calling out to one another, 'We play the pipes, but you refuse to dance; we raise a lament, but you will not mourn'. Like all good men, John was misunderstood, for few knew the measure of greatness. He lived simply, neither eating nor drinking to excess, and because of his way of life men called him 'crazy'. The Servant of Man comes along and goes among the people, eating and drinking with them, and he is accused of gluttony, loose living and drunkenness. What must a man do to

prove himself in the eyes of the people? Whatever he does is wrong."

One of the Perushim who was nearby said to Jesus, "We understand Your meaning, but where do You stand in relation to the law, have You come to take it away or declare it obsolete?" Jesus replied, "No one patches an old cloak with new fabric, for this shows up its age without strengthening it. Likewise, no sensible person puts new wine into old wineskins, for this causes them to split, the wine pouring out so neither the wine nor the wineskins have any value. Is it not much wiser to put new wine into new wineskins? I have come to place something beside that which is already there, to hold a mirror to the law and to man, so both may be seen with greater clarity."

A poor man standing nearby said, "What use is the wisdom of the Holy Books? Will it provide our bread?" Jesus replied, "What use is a lamp at night, will its light appease hunger? Is it worthless because it cannot do so? Each thing has its appointed use, the foot should not be called upon to do the work of the arm, nor the ear the work of the eyes."

"A carpenter does not do the work of a potter, nor does a weaver make ploughs. A pupil may not be a good teacher, nor a servant a good master, each must seek only to excel in the position he has and not to be better than others at their own task. Whoever supports Me, that person will I support, and I will strive with those who are against Me."

"I have not come to bring peace but to put a sword into the hands of men, setting sons against their fathers and daughters against their mothers. For nothing is worthy if a man will not fight for it. Anyone following Me will find enemies among his own kindred, and though he love his parents above all else, I will give him a cause which is greater. My burden is not light and must be shouldered with fortitude and courage, those finding it too heavy must go elsewhere."

"The man who seeks to preserve his life through cowardice will be deprived of its benefits, and he who is prepared to make sacrifices for the cause of man will surely gain the crown of life.

Whoever receives a good and just man openly, giving him his due, shall in turn be given the reward of his merit; but those who expect to receive rewards bestowable only by One greater than a prophet, will be disappointed."

It was after this that Jesus said to His disciples, "When the task is difficult a man seeks consolation from his father. A man may be lonely among many, but no one need be lonely in the spirit, for this is never shut off from communication with a source of comfort." Then Jesus prayed "O Father Above Heaven and Earth, Your Son submits to Your will, and if things declared in Your name remain mysteries to the learned but are revelations to the simple-hearted, You know best, My Father. You have placed a great responsibility on Your Son, but few heed Him. The Father's words, spoken through the mouth of His Son, are not highly regarded."

Later, at another place, Jesus said to the people gathered there, "Follow Me all those who are overburdened and weary, and I will help you. Take the yoke of My cause upon you and learn from Me, for this will ease and not add to your load. I am understanding and compassionate, not expecting anyone to bear a load too heavy for them. The heavy-laden shall know the light and be moved from the darkness, but they who cast aside their burden and go astray are lost forever in darkness. Life loads each according to his capacity and no two bear a similar burden."

At this time Jesus always kept some disciples with Him when He walked about, and one Sabbath He and two of them were following a small pathway leading past uncut corn ripening in the husk. The disciples plucked a handful, for the law permitted them to do this, providing they did not enter the field or take any away, and rubbing the ears between their fingers ate the grains. Three Perushim were passing by and they rebuked the disciples and said to Jesus, "Why do You allow Your followers to do things not permitted on the Sabbath" Jesus answered, "Does the deed affect the day? Have you not read that when driven by hunger David went into the House of God and took the sanctified loaves to eat, sharing them with his men? Though these loaves were reserved for

priestly fare, did he not justify himself by saying all things produced by the Earth were for the use of men? Surely, the Sabbath was made for the sake of man and not man for the sake of the Sabbath! As man bows to the needs of life, so the Sabbath must bow to the needs of men."

Towards evening, as they returned, Jesus saw a man working in the fields and said to him, "If your labours are dedicated to the service of God you are blessed, but if it is otherwise you are a lawbreaker." The disciples, hearing this, said, "Sire, is there so much difference between the things of the morning and the things of the evening?" Jesus said, "The same difference as between an empty stomach and a full one, the same thing may be forgiven one man but not another."

On another Sabbath Jesus came out of the temple, to be accosted by a man with a paralysed arm who said, "Sire, I am a mason who can no longer be useful and must humiliate myself by begging for food to feed my family let me become a whole man again, not for my sake but for the sake of those depending upon me." Nearby stood some self-righteous members of the congregation who watched closely to see what Jesus would do; but He knowing their thoughts, called them over and said, "Let Me know your views concerning the keeping of the Sabbath. Should good be done when it would be uncharitable to leave it undone?" When they said, "We abide by the law as it is interpreted for us by those knowing better than we." Jesus became angry and was hurt in His heart, for their hard-heartedness and wrongful interpretation of the law were indications of their spiritual apathy, so He healed the man's arm. The self-righteous see no wrong in themselves, only in others, and they interpret all things to accord with their own convenience.

Then the self-righteous ones left, plotting among themselves, and they decided to become supporters of Herod who was against Jesus. They said, "Let us set a trap for this troublemaker who condemns our ways. He reproaches us for wrongdoing when we simply obey the law, and accuses us of things which he declares to be sinful but which are no more than natural weaknesses of men.

He proclaims Himself to be the mouthpiece of God, so let us test Him and see. Let us find out whether He speaks true or false. We will send men to beat Him up, and see then whether God comes to His aide. Let other men abuse Him and hurl insults at Him, heaping every kind of indignity upon Him, treating Him roughly to test His gentleness. We will heckle Him and cause commotion whenever He speaks, and see whether He abides by His own teachings under provocation."

They laid their plans. However, there were others who came to Jesus and asked Him how they would recognise the Deliverer when He appeared among them. Jesus said, "Is it not written, 'He will judge the disinherited and lowly who trust in Him. He will smite the Earth with the rod of His tongue and destroy wickedness. He will be girdled with integrity and belted with trustworthiness'." Then some said, "Surely, this Man is God's Anointed."

Someone said, "Sire, how do we know the Deliverer will come to us?" Jesus said, "Is it not written, 'He will come to the worthy and just, but to the people He will be like a winnowing fan, ensuring only the best are gathered in'. It is also said, 'He will bless those who follow Him with wisdom and gladness. He will be sinless, gathering together a dedicated people whom He will lead in righteousness as an example to all nations. They will cast out the ungodly from their midst. Those born in the days of the Deliverer will witness the things He will do for the generations which follow'. Is it not also written, 'The words of His mouth will smite the Earth forever, and for the chosen among men there will be a guiding light for the rest of their days'."

Chapter Twelve

PETER, WHO HAD BEEN CALLED SIMON, owned a house beside an olive garden, and his brother, his wife and his mother-in-law lived there with children and servants. These did not welcome Jesus, while Peter's mother-in-law kept to her bed, for she was down with fever. Jesus, finding her in this condition sat down beside her and, taking her hand, stroked it so she soon slept. When she awoke she got up and attended to the guests, for the fever had gone.

The brother of Peter said to Jesus, "This place already supports sufficient priests and expounders of religion, and You bring others with You to swell their numbers. How will you all live?" Jesus said, "I will tell you a parable. An inconsiderate man once owned a cat which he sometimes neglected to feed. One day he came home with a dog found wandering and lost. The cat said to the dog, 'Now I shall surely starve, for you are much bigger than I am and the food for you will be often forgotten, so you will devour mine'. The dog said, 'This will not be so, for when we are hungry I can bark and whine, which you cannot do, this will show the master we are hungry and we will both be fed'."

Later, while they were dining Jesus said, "Men say I am the scourge of the Perushim, but this is untrue, for many of these are godly men whom it would be unworthy to lash with the tongue. It is the painted Perushim, the hypocrites pretending to be what they are not whom I criticise. There are those who carry their goodness

on their shoulders for all to see, those who say, 'Tell me my duty and I will do it, show me my obligations and I will carry them out.' Those who bow to the ground so their eyes may not look on passing women, those who trip over their feet with excessive humility and those who do good out of fear. I bring their faults into the light of day, so they may benefit from their own shame."

The brother of Peter said, "Sire, we are respectable people and live among our own kind, for a man who works among goats always carries some of their smell. Why do You associate with wrongdoers?" Jesus said, "I prefer the wrongdoer who is aware of his deficiencies to the good man who is over aware of his goodness. Is the starving and desperate man who steals to feed his hungry children bad, while the overfed respectable man protected from temptation by the wealth ill earned is good? Which of the two needs compassion? Going to the temple makes no one good unless goodness is already established in their hearts. No truly good man could serve the Father devotedly for an hour and then turn his back on Him for the rest of the day."

Jesus went outside to where there was an open space surrounded by trees, and here a crowd started to gather around Him. While He was speaking, a man pushed through in distress and coming close to Jesus begged Him to come and save his young daughter. Jesus said, "I will go to her immediately I leave here."

Now, a leper stood apart from the crowd and Jesus went over to him, saying, "Do you want to be made well?" The man answered, "O Sire, You could make me a new man if You would only will it to be so." Jesus touched him and the man's affliction began to depart. Jesus said to him, "Go to a priest, taking the prescribed offering of your cleansing, and he will testify to the cure." Those about said among themselves, "He heals unlike other Holy Men, for those He cures seem to be filled with a strange form of vigour."

As Jesus went back into the gathering a centurion came up to Him and said, "I have heard of Your powers from many people, my son is at home and in great pain, will You kindly heal him and for this I will be forever grateful." Jesus said, "I will come and

heal him," but the centurion replied, "My house is a very humble place and hardly fit for You to enter, just command it and I know the boy will be cured, for I trust You. I who give and take orders know the power of command."

Jesus was surprised to hear these words and, turning to those who followed Him, said, "Nowhere in the land have I seen faith such as this. Believe Me, many will come from East and West thinking to sit among our forefathers in the Kingdom of the Spirit, but many who are heirs to this Kingdom, having forfeited their heritage will be found outside the gates and there will be weeping and wailing." Then Jesus said to the centurion, "Go home, My friend, because of your trust I will not disappoint you." Then Jesus gave the centurion a piece of metal, saying, "Place this beside the boy," and from that time the boy began to recover.

In the crowd which pressed around Jesus was a woman who had suffered from bleeding for twelve years, whom no one had been able to cure. Coming up behind Jesus she prayed silently to herself and touched Him on the back. At once the woman began to feel comfortable and relieved, but Jesus knew the healing power had been drawn from Him in an unexpected outsurge. Turning to the disciples in the crowd, who stood guard, He asked who had touched Him.

Peter, who was there, said, "How can we know, the crowd presses so close we can hardly control them." The woman, hearing this and fearful for what she had done, came forward and fell on her knees before Jesus, confessing her guilt. He raised her up gently, saying, "My daughter, it is not the power in Me alone, but your faith has opened a door whereby it poured out to effect a cure. Be at peace in your heart, for the complaint will trouble you no more."

After this Jesus needed a rest, and while doing so a servant came bearing a message to the man whose daughter had been ill, telling him she had died. Jesus, overhearing what was said, called the man to Him and said, "Do not upset yourself, just trust Me and wait awhile, and we will go together." Jesus then bid the crowd remain where it was and went with the father and his

servant, accompanied by three disciples. When they arrived at the man's house, mourners had already started the wailing of the laments, and Jesus rebuked them for making such a noise when the girl was only sleeping, for He had sent His Spirit before Him. The mourners said, "What kind of a fool is this?"

Ordering them outside, Jesus, accompanied by the parents and two disciples, entered the room where the child was lying. Taking her hands Jesus said, "Wake up, My little one," and after a while she gave a great breath. Later, opening her eyes she smiled and soon got up. The parents were overcome, but when they recovered Jesus told them to keep their own counsel and attend to the child. When they had left, James, one of the disciples, asked, "Why are some brought back to life and others not?' Jesus answered, "Did I not say this one only slept? There is a time appointed for dying and the spirits of men keep their appointments. I work with the law of life, not against it."

When they arrived back at the place where the crowd was gathered, there was a man lying in their midst, with a greatly swollen leg which had crippled him for many years. He said to Jesus, "Sire, I have been a sinful man and have been punished." Jesus said, "Be of good heart, for your suffering has compensated for your misdeeds." Some nearby, who were hostile towards Jesus, hearing this said, "This is blasphemous talk." Overhearing what was said Jesus turned to them and replied, "Talk such as this is cheap and serves no end, it takes more than a wagging tongue to effect cures." Then Jesus said to the man on the ground, "Arise and go your way." Thereupon he got up and walked, the people being amazed and giving thanks that such powers could be manifested among them.

Jesus then left and returned to the house of Peter, and when He arrived found several Perushim waiting outside. They said, "We hear You have much wisdom, what is the basis of your teaching? What sign can You give of Your authority, or what proof so we can believe. Moses provided heavenly bread when our people starved in the wilderness and by his deeds we know him for a true prophet." A disciple said, "He has just healed four people."

But the Perushim replied, “There are others who heal, this power is not unique in Him.”

Then Jesus said, “Must you have proof and be given signs to believe? Surely, this would take all merit from belief. As for Moses I assure you he did not provide bread from Heaven when he fed those who starved in the wilderness. Through Me, God will send down the bread of Heaven which nourishes the world. Therefore, when working to support yourselves do not overlook the need for the bread of Heaven which nourishes the spirit, for man cannot live by mortal bread alone. Strive less for perishable food and more for the food of eternal life.” The crowd answered, “O Sire, never fail to provide us with this bread.”

Jesus said, “I bring the bread of life, whoever partakes of it will never hunger. I bring the water of eternity and whoever drinks of it will never thirst. All I am intended to receive from above I will share with everyone who comes to Me. The power I have comes from Heaven and is used, not for My own ends but to serve the purpose of He who gave it. His will is that I should waste no particle of what I have been given, but must account for it when my work is ended. For it is the will of He who invested Me with authority and power that whoever has faith in Me and believes in My cause, putting My teachings into practice, will enjoy immortality in glory.”

One of the Perushim said to Jesus, “Why do so many flock to hear You speak instead of going to the temples and places of assembly? Why do they have to listen to someone speaking on the streets and hillsides when they could listen to those fully armed with knowledge of the law?” Jesus answered, “I too am surprised so many seek to learn righteousness from Me. Maybe they come because I am among those disinherited, but before telling them what to do put yourselves in their place. Can it be they find My teachings more sustaining and closer to their hearts?”

Many of the Jews were angry at the teachings of Jesus, for He said, “I have the true bread of life and of Heaven.” They said, “Is this not the Jesus we know, son of Joseph and Mary who are just ordinary people?” Jesus once said to them, “Do not say things

behind My back when you can say them to My face. I will draw no one away from your own teachings unless something greater inclines them towards Me, but if it does they are on the way to immortality. The prophets promised your forefathers that their descendants would receive instructions from God. So can you not believe these things? Therefore, anyone God inclines towards Me hears Me speak with His voice."

The people who joined the crowds about Jesus filled Him with compassion, for they were so anxious to find the Deliverer. They seemed pathetically helpless and lost, like sheep without a shepherd. Jesus said to His disciples, "The seed planted was good and there is a rich harvest ready for the cutting, but alas, the harvesters are few, therefore the overseer must be requested to send more men."

The following day Jesus was seated among the trees near the house of Peter, and with Him were many disciples and one said to Him, "Sire, since the days of our fathers many slaves have come into the land, great numbers having no slaves being forced into brigandage, for otherwise they would starve. Are these men evildoers?" Jesus replied, "What they do is not good and therefore must be evil, but though their wrongdoing may be great in the eyes of men it is small in the eyes of God, compared with the evil done by those who stand behind the deed. Many, blameless in the eyes of men, will not escape the judgement of eternity."

"The disinherited say, 'All things will change when God wills it', but I tell you the father will not do the work of His sons. The Deliverer comes to take men to their places of labour and will ease their burdens there, but He cannot undertake the whole of the task. He will initiate the Rule of God, but cannot force it upon men. He will teach them to judge the underprivileged justly and to deal harshly with the arrogant. The rich will be less rich and the poor less poor. He will point the feet of men towards the path of perfection, but cannot carry them along it. Earthly kings can drive men to fulfil their tasks, but no one can be driven along the path to glory, only those who guide and lead can take men this way."

"I bring the Light and the Light is a good tree bearing

beneficial fruit, but fruit on the tree of darkness is consistent with conditions about its roots. For all trees are rooted in darkness, but the good tree transmutes the things of darkness into things of light."

A disciple said to Jesus, "Sire, You say harsh things about the rulers and those in high places but do not seek to arm us against them. Surely, the day of arming comes soon." Jesus answered, "A physician it called to treat the sickness and a healthy man does not require his attentions. The good in men I strengthen but leave untouched, it is the evil I seek out to destroy. Were it not for the strength of those who govern there would be no peace in the land, man would strive with man and there would be murder and pillage everywhere. It would be like the sea where big fish feed on the small and nothing is there to prevent it. Therefore, if murder and robbery are kept from your door pay due homage to those who stand guard."

"If an evil king be guarded by a thousand good men, should these be slain to kill the king? Is it not best to first take the good men away from service with the king, bringing them into your own ranks? Those who serve evil, though powerful and wily are cowards and hide behind the arms of better men. Therefore, by killing the brave men are you not adding evil to evil? No, first bring the good and brave men to your side and then let events happen as they will."

A young disciple who became an envoy said, "You speak about bread unlike other bread, but the meaning is not clear to me, tell me again about it." Jesus said, "I will tell you with certainty, he who follows My cause wholeheartedly will gain eternal life, for I have the bread of immortality. The bread I give forms part of My being, and I share it for the good of the world. Many have the grains, but these are yet to be ground and baked. Unless, therefore, you can partake of My substance and become like Me you cannot gain immortality in glory. Yet what I can do you can do also, what I have become you can become. I do not ask men to follow a path I would not travel Myself, neither is there anything in Me not inherent in you. As I am, I am the true food of men and the power

of life flowing in Me is their true drink. I come with special gifts and authority from above, clothed with the Living Spirit, and I express life as I do because of the powers within Me. So it will be with those who partake of My bread."

Many of those with Jesus could not hold these things in their hearts, for they were not easily understood, but one recorded them. Some, hearing these teachings, said, "These words are not easy to understand and difficult to accept." Jesus said, "So you find difficulty in accepting what I say. Suppose you could see Me communicating with My place of origin, would you believe then? But the eyes of the flesh cannot see things intended only for the eyes of the spirit."

"Only the spirit contains the power of life, and the flesh of itself can see or do nothing. The words I have spoken concern only the lifeholding Spirit and I have not referred to worldly matters, but still you do not understand. I know you are perplexed and confused by My teachings, that is why I said something greater must speak internally to incline you toward Me." From this day many disciples and followers no longer heeded Him.

It is written in the Holy Books of the Jews, 'In the days of unrighteousness I will send forth a firebrand to consume the world with fire.' Also, 'Then each man shall know the fullness of his own nature, and his reward shall be according to his measure'.

Chapter Thirteen

JESUS WENT FROM THERE to the house of His mother, for Mary had a small inheritance. She was a careful woman, for once, when her children were young, having lost a small silver coin she swept the floor carefully sifting until she found it.

Leaving there He withdrew to the sea, for Jesus liked to swim and be among boats. Now, while He was there a great number came from Galilee, from all of Juda and from Jerusalem, some even from beyond Jordan and from the coast of the Western Sea where He was known.

Jesus bid His followers prepare a small ship as quickly as possible to take Him away from the great crowd pressing about Him. As He had cured so many who were afflicted, those still uncured tried to touch Him, and there was a constant shoving and scuffling to get nearer. Escaping in the boat He went with it a short distance to where a path led up a hillside. Climbing this to a small mount He sat down with His disciples. The time for celebrating the great festival was approaching and Jesus had sent out many envoys and heralds.

Seeing that a large crowd had gathered on the hillside Jesus stood up and addressed the people, after they were seated, in this manner, "This is a night of ignorance, when men wander lost in the darkness of worldly conditions. I am the Light and Hope of men."

"These are the people I support and accept, and this is the message I give to them. For I have come to unsheath the sword of

the spirit among men and to lead them forth to fight the battles of God. The sword is the spirit, even as the body is the scabbard. Let your swords be bright and keen for the fray, be stalwart and resolute, and the Rule of God will surely sweep all wickedness and evil, all pain and distress from the face of Earth."

"I accept the oppressed and dispirited, for they shall inherit glory in the Kingdom of the Spirit."

"I accept those who grieve, for they should not be without a comforter. Is it not written, 'Let the words of God be an unquenchable light within you, and they will shorten your days of sorrow'?"

"I accept the disinherited, for they shall inherit the Earth. Is it not written, 'The disinherited shall be joyful amid bounty and peace'?"

"I accept those who hunger after enlightenment, for they shall be satisfied. Is it not written, 'The pleasures of the foodtable sit heavily on the stomach, but wisdom fills the heart with satisfaction and content'?"

"I accept the compassionate, for they shall be compensated. Is it not written, 'He who has compassion builds a fountain of consolation for his time of need'?"

"I accept the purehearted, for their nature draws them closer to God. Is it not written, 'He whose hands and heart are clean receives the fullest measure of spiritpower'?"

"I accept the peacemakers, for they are truly the heirs of God. Is it not written,'Listen, My children, and I will teach you the ways that are good, causing you to seek for peace and maintain it'?"

"I accept those who suffer in the cause of mankind, for on them shall fall the mantle of glory in the Kingdom of the Spirit. Is it not written, 'When they scorned and abused Me I was strengthened by the Spirit of God and nothing can now dismay Me'?"

"I accept those whose motives, when seeking to do good, are misunderstood, for their place in glory is established. Is it not written, 'Because they have reviled and slandered you eternal glory will be granted'?"

"You whom I accept are the salt of the Earth, but if the savour

of the salt disappears it is useless. As salt without any flavour would be good for nothing, so those without goodness in their hearts serve no purpose. As salt adds flavour to food, so do good men make life more acceptable."

"I am your Light, but you are the light of the world. Therefore build a strong city set on a hill, for a light shining from a hilltop cannot be hidden. I have given you the light so it may be put to use, for men do not put a lighted candle under a grain basket but in a candlestick where it can light up the room."

"Let your lights shine before men, so they see the path clearly. Join your lights together, so they combine to form an unquenchable flame, for while a candle is easily snuffed out it takes many men to subdue a forest fire. Be stouthearted and resolute, for the struggle will be grim, the foe is wily and well entrenched behind thick walls."

"Those who have lived with poverty and misery, maintaining a cheerful heart in tribulation, will arise to glory. Those who are broken serving the cause of God will receive a mantle of splendour. Those whose proper desires remain unfulfilled on Earth will find fulfilment in Heaven. Those who have cheerfully borne affliction or deformity will radiate strength, and those who die for the cause of justice and peace will inherit life in glory."

"I reject those who oppose the Rule of God. I herald a reborn world even as I was heralded, but while such as these encumber the Earth it will not be reborn. I assure you of this: Unless the world be reborn it cannot know the Rule of God. The upheaval of the labour pains will be great, for though many will say, 'Speed the day' with their lips, in their hearts they will be saying, 'The cost is too great, spare the coming'. By their fruits shall they be known and by their deeds shall they be judged."

"I reject the rich who live with their riches, or those who live beyond the bounds of moderation, for they shall be humbled in outer darkness. Is it not written, 'Those in houses of comfort, where they sit at ease listening to instruments of music and sleep on soft beds of ivory, shall not survive'?"

"I reject those who gorge themselves with refinements of food

while others hunger, for they shall hunger in the Kingdom of the Spirit. Is it not written, 'They who serve God will be filled, but those who do not will want'?"

"I reject those who scorn the way of wisdom, seeking vain pleasures which dull the spirit, for they shall be sorrowful in their proper place. Is it not written, 'The spirits of those who serve God shall be joyful, but the spirits of those who reject Him shall weep in sorrow and regret'?"

"I reject the arrogant and selfish and those mainly concerned with themselves, for they will be friendless in their place. Is it not written, "The things built of selfishness and false pride will be broken'?"

"I reject the liars and deceivers, for their abode is a place of darkness. Is it not written, 'The deceitful shall not know the presence of God'?"

"I reject those who encourage ignorance, walking stiffnecked, their hearts an unopened book, for they shall not be enlightened. Is it not written, 'Those who shower scorn on the words of others and close their eyes to righteousness shall not receive a righteous reward in their place'?"

"I reject the fornicators and adulterers and those who seek after lewd pleasures, for they shall go to a place of uncleanliness. Is it not written, 'Only they who are clean can come into the presence of God'?"

"I reject the avaricious who needlessly add to their possessions and the hardhearted who thoughtlessly bring distress to others, for their place is in the darkest depths. Is it not written, 'All who benefit from greed and oppression shall be utterly cut off from glory'?"

"I reject those who in any way cause needless suffering, for they shall go to a place of pain. Is it not written, 'He who causes distress, though it be done in secret yet he is seen and will repay'?"

"I reject the hypocrites and self-deceivers, for their loathesomeness will be properly purged. Is it not written, 'Words not written in the heart should never issue from the mouth'."

"Woe to all who hear My words but twist their meaning to

suit their convenience. If a man says he is with Me but does not abide by My teachings, then he is a hypocrite. If he says, 'But I live in circumstances where this does not apply', he is a liar. Far better that such as these say, 'We are against You', for until they do the world will not be reborn. I bring light to the thrashing floor of life, where suffering and misfortune are the flails, tribulation and distress the winnowing fan and the Wisdom of God the winnowing shovel. Here the wheat is separated from the husks, the chaff is thrown out and the good grains gathered up."

"I come to build a new temple, and if you say, 'These are good teachings', and take them to your heart but tomorrow revile your neighbour and deceive your kinfolk, you are an unstable brick. If the temple be built with such material, surely it will collapse and those within will perish. Is it not better if it were never built? If you say, 'But I am weak', then examine your defects and you take the first step to stability but examination is a waste of this unless leading to rectification."

"I call you to serve no mean cause but to stand beside Me and claim your inheritance. Those who dispute the claim are the ones I reject, and you must set your faces against them, even as I do. Come and inherit the incorruptible glory which is in Heaven, even as flesh is on Earth. The way is narrow and difficult, for no one who has not been tempted and tried can attain his reward."

"He that is near Me is close to a blazing fire and may get burned but he who withdraws from the heat withdraws from Heaven. Some have said, 'The yoke of the law sits heavy on our shoulders', but I tell you, I come not to lighten but to increase the burden. Moses brought the law which says not to kill, but I say, any who releases anger on his brother without just cause shall not escape judgement."

"The law you have condemns adultery, but I tell you that if any man looks upon a woman with fornication in mind he is no less guilty, for it is what a man thinks that will lead him to glory or decay. He who is pure in love does not defile his heart by looking at another woman with fornication in view."

"The law you have says, 'No man shall put his wife aside unless

he give her a bill of divorcement', but I tell you that whosoever seeks to put his wife aside, except for adultery or she is found unchaste, places her on the path of adultery and is therefore not guiltless. What God has blended in spirit let no man seek to severe, but those joined in body and not in Spirit are not sanctified."

"The law you have says, 'You shall not swear falsely or break an oath, though if you vow something to the service of God the pledge must be kept'. I tell you never to swear any oath but confine yourself to a straightforward 'Yes' or 'No'. It is needless to say more, for the word of a godly man is more binding than the most solemn oath sworn by another. If you are not a godly man, then doubtless your word and oath would be worthless anyway."

"If your eye give cause for complaint, leading you towards lewdness or obscenity, pluck it out. It is of greater advantage to suffer disfigurement on Earth than to be cast into the depths to suffer it there. If your right hand give cause for complaint, cut it off, for if your body be maimed on Earth you bear with it a little time; but surely, do nothing to prevent it remaining intact in the place of glory."

"The law you have says, 'Love your neighbours and hate your enemies' but I tell you to love your enemies, do good to those who hate you and pray for those who deceive or persecute you. For if you only give love for love, this cannot be claimed as a meritorious thing, when even criminals return the love of those who love them. If you only repay good with good, dealing fairly only with those who treat you likewise, how can merit be claimed for this which is no more than criminals do? It is the same if you give only to those who give to you, for criminals give to their own kind. Can you stand by and let it be said that criminals treat each other better than do godly men? Love your enemies but not their faults. Love those who hate you but concede nothing to their wickedness. Give without expectation of return, then only can you lay claim to goodness and be called a Servant of God."

"I have not come to abolish the law or to change the teachings of the prophets but to complete them, adding any necessary clarification and interpreting them to the understanding

of men. But the time has come to ask, 'When will they be put into practice? When will men bring God out of the temple and make Him a Participant in their daily lives? When will men carry these things in their hearts and stop paying them lip service? I say with certainty, so long as Earth and the Heavens above it remain, not even the smallest particle shall be deducted from the law until the purpose it serves has been completed. Therefore, if anyone try to avoid even the least obligation imposed by the law, or to set aside the slightest of its restrictions, or teach others to do the same, he will be an insignificant thing in the life to come. But whoever lives by them, leading others to do likewise, will achieve the greatest heights of glory."

"Do all charitable acts privately, not displaying your righteousness to catch the eyes of others, for by doing so you void their benefits. Only those seeking public acclaim and hypocrites do these things ostentatiously. Never seek publicity for your deeds of goodness nor let it be forced on you. I assure you that those who do these things have their reward on Earth and nothing awaits them elsewhere. When setting out on an errand of goodness, keep your right hand in ignorance of the left hand's deeds. Do your good deeds in secret, knowing they are not overlooked and will be duly rewarded, but do them without thought of reward or they will lose their merit."

"Do not be like the hypocrites who pray in the sight of everyone, they are being rewarded now. Pray in solitude, for your Father can be contacted from anywhere and is everywhere. Never use needless repetition or ramble on in the mistaken belief that the more you say the more likely you are to be heard. Do not be a mere babbler of words, for prayer is not formed by words alone. Remember, your every need is known, so whatever is withheld may be for your own good. Prayer is contact between spirit and Spirit, and should seek only to reinforce the strength of the spirit."

"This is a pattern for prayer, 'Our Father in Spirit, may Your Nature become known among men and Your Rule established on Earth, according to the heavenly plan. May Your Design be completed. Give us the sustenance we need and overlook our

transgressions as we overlook the transgressions of others. Do not test us too severely and strengthen us against the servants of evil'."

"If you overlook the failings of others and forgive people for the wrongs they have done you, then the burden of your own will be alleviated. Also, when you fast or undertake an obligation, do not be like the hypocrites who lengthen their faces, going about it self-righteously, bringing themselves to the attention of others."

"Hoard no earthly treasures which can be destroyed by moths and decay, or may be stolen by thieves. It is far better to establish a storehouse in the Spiritland, for there you can accumulate treasures beyond reach of these things. A man's heart is never far from the place where he establishes his credit."

"Providing you view everything optimistically, maintaining a cheerful and confident outlook, you will radiate assurance. If you do not, you will shed despondency and gloom wherever you go. No man has ever succeeded in serving two masters, for his loyalties must lie with one or the other. Neither can a man have two prime objectives, he must aim for an earthly goal or a spiritual one."

"I advise you not to worry unduly about the future needs of the body, how it will be nourished and clothed. There is more to life than eating and comfort, while overdone pleasure soon palls. Keep this one fact constantly in mind: The soul is of more importance than the body."

"Think about the birds of the air, they neither sow nor reap or gather in a harvest, yet provision has been made for their needs. Do you think any less consideration has been given to your welfare? Trust in the powers above and when things go wrong try to understand the reason. When you are being tried by tribulation, try and see the objective of the test."

"Is there anyone among you who, by thought alone, can add an armslength to his height? Worry is a useless activity of the mind, so why worry about food and clothing? Look how the wild flowers grow in the meadows, they do not toil or spin, yet Solomon in full regalia was not attired so attractively as one of these."

"If such beauty is bestowed on wildflowers which can display

it for only a few days before being consumed, shall God not give much more attention to you His children, or have you no faith in anything? Therefore, worry less about material things and concentrate more on the spiritual, making the cause of God your main concern. Do this and all other things will come within your reach. Do not worry about tomorrow, for it will look after itself. Each day will bring you sufficient problems without the need to worry about those of other days."

"There is no reason why hypocrisy, the disease of the day, should come so naturally to men, but which of you is not contaminated by it? How many of you are self-deceivers, making excuses for these things? How is it you can readily detect the small faults in others while being absolutely blind to your own much greater ones? How can you say to another, 'Let me help you see more clearly', when you are practically blind yourself? You, hypocrites and self-deceivers, first examine your own faults and failings before criticising those of others."

"Never be afraid to voice your needs, and if you have a friend turn to him whenever you require help, for this is the nature of friendship. Ask and you will receive, seek and you will find, knock and the door will be opened. These things are the law of life, for at the end it will be said to you, 'As you sought, so have you found, and according to the manner of asking have you received'. It is not what you seek but how you seek, not what you request but the manner of requesting."

"Is there any man among you who, if his son ask for bread, will give him a stone, or a snake if he ask for a fish? If then, you, with all your mortal faults and ignorance, know how to give the right things to your children, how much more able is God to give what is right for His. The things you surely do not need are comfort and content, while assurance and security open the gates to spiritual apathy. Enter by the narrow unpretentious gate, for the road leading to the dark abyss has a wide road and attractive entrance, while the gate leading to immortality is austere and the road fraught with difficulties."

"Beware of false prophets and those who would mislead you,

for many seeking to promote their own ends walk the ways of righteousness, clothed in sheepskins, but are hypocrites, being ravening wolves within. Those who indicate an easy path are false guides, and those who say another can absolve them from the effects of their misdeeds, expound an error. You will know them by the effects of their teachings, just as a good tree is recognised through the fruit it bears. Can the wildthorn produce grapes, or are figs found growing on thistles? If a tree fail to produce good fruit, it is cut down and burned, for it can serve no better purpose. Therefore I say, judge men by the fruits of their labours."

"Some hail Me as their Leader, thinking this will help them in the life to come, but it will not. Only those who wholeheartedly serve the cause and purpose of God will enjoy this in full glory. Many who do things in My name will expect Me to intercede for them, but to these I will say, I did not know you or authorise the statements you made, by your deeds shall you be judged."

"This does not apply to those who, hearing My words, put them into practice, for they are like the sensible man who built his house on a foundation of rock. The rain poured down and the floods rose, the wind howled above and beat against the house, but it did not collapse because it was set firmly. But there will be many who, hearing these words of Mine, will ignore them, and these may be likened to a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain poured down, the floods rose, the wind howled and beat against the walls, and the whole house collapsed."

"I herald the coming of the Rule of God and a reborn world, I accept those who follow My way and I will lead them into their kingdom. I reject all those who are against My way. I call upon men of goodwill to follow us, men who wholeheartedly desire the light, and oppose the way of darkness, but the road may be long and beset by many foes. Yet have no fear of those who come with swords and fiery words, their danger is apparent; those who will be our undoing are the hypocrites and self-deceivers who pay lip service only and manipulate the words of the law to accord with their convenience. I tell you this: "Many will come but few will be selected."

"Moses viewed the promised land only from Pisgah; let this

not be your fate, face the difficulties ahead, overcome the evildoers who maintain the rule of evil, and claim your reward. The sword is drawn but the battle has yet to be won. In the reborn world the wolf shall lay down with the lamb and the lion with the kid, and a little child will play with them. Surely, because of their goodness and goodwill even the wild beasts will submit themselves to the will of those who participate in the Rule of God."

When Jesus finished speaking, the great assembly of people was silent, for, unlike other teachers, He appeared inspired by divine authority; but within moments they were excitedly discussing the words among themselves. Then a disciple who stood beside Jesus shouted, "All who serve God, praise Him, for He has sent a true Enlightener and a Deliverer, and will Himself reign over us through the Spirit which fills His Son. Heed these things, follow the way of Jesus, take up the cross of life and the Rule of God is at hand."

There were many among the crowd who said, "Surely, this is God's Anointed for whom we have long waited. Now we will be delivered according to the promises of the prophets." Hearing the things said by the people among themselves, Jesus was saddened and said to Bartholomew who stood near Him, "Tomorrow they will revert to their old way of life and permit evil to reign through hypocrites and self-deceivers. How can they be brought to understand that should God intervene to bring about the Rule of God, Earth and mankind will have failed Him and be unworthy of His rule? Life's purpose is to produce shepherds, not sheep, but the lives of the people are turned inwards upon themselves."

It was now late in the day, but many people still lingered and a disciple said to Jesus, "Sire, the crowd was very large and many did not hear all Your words, could You not speak to these, for though hungry they would still rather listen to You." Jesus said, "My throat aches but I have bread more satisfying than that which fills the stomach, and meat more satisfying than worldly meat, My supply is inexhaustible. I have multiplied this through you, so now you go among the people and provide what they need."

Chapter Fourteen

SOME DAYS LATER Jesus was in another place with about sixty disciples, one of whom said to Him, "There is Joshua the Faster who claims to be the Chosen One of God and Joseph who proclaims deliverance by the sword, while many say the Enlightener and Deliverer are two men. The gale of words makes it difficult to get a bearing on the harbour entrance." Jesus said, "Things are changing and many alive today will live to see a different world. I come to set men free by removing the shackles of ignorance and to deliver them from evil and from themselves."

Hearing this, many of the disciples left and Jesus said to those who remained beside Him, "Do you also wish to go your way?" Peter answered for all, "Sire, Your teachings excel those of others, for they carry the hope of eternal life. We believe You to be the Chosen Messenger of God who speaks with His voice; we accept what You say because it responds to the yearnings of our hearts." Jesus said, "We all make mistakes and though I have chosen unwisely with others I have not been mistaken with you."

Jesus did not proclaim Himself to the people according to their understanding and devoted much time to the teaching of disciples. This concerned mainly the coming Rule of God, but to the twelve He taught many hidden things, for there was knowledge suitable only for a few. He said to them, "You are among those entitled to know secrets concerning the Rule of God, but to those who are not numbered among the elect everything

should be explained simply and in parables. It is truly written in the Sacred Books, 'They may see with the eyes and be deceived, and hear without understanding, but if they would only turn to God their ignorance would be wiped away'."

Then Jesus appointed the twelve as envoys to go out among the people and proclaim the things He had said. The twelve were: Simon renamed Peter, James and John sons of the Tempest, Andrew Saronides, Philip Bardrush, Bartholomew the Stranger, Matthew the Levite, Thomas son of Jonas, Thaddeus called Lebios before he came, James son of Alfeous, Judas of Iscaroth and Simon of Cana, the zealot.

Jesus sent them out with these instructions: "Avoid Samaritan towns, keep away from places where the people are being stirred up for strife, but go to the Jews wherever they are to be found. When entering a dwelling, give the greeting, 'Peace be on this house'. I know that you are being sent like sheep delivered to the wolves, for you do not bear the message expected by the people. So be careful, always alert, cunning as serpents and harmless as doves. Beware of those who would bring you before their courts and do not concern yourselves about what to say, for when it becomes necessary you will receive inspiration from the Holy Spirit, and words will come."

"I can assure you of this, whoever stands by Me upholding My cause before men, him I will stand beside before the Council of Heaven. Give no heed to what is said about Me, it is already forgiven, but slander against the powers of the Holy Spirit, which is the Hand of God, is unforgivable."

One of the twelve said, "We will meet other teachers whose words will not be the same as those spoken by You." Jesus said, "This will certainly be so, for to each man his own road and his own light, but Truth is Truth whoever proclaims it, and must be obeyed. However, Truth is something rarely seen clearly, and even many who see it have difficulty in describing it to others. Speak about the good and evil which are manifest in the lives of men and tell them each shall be judged according to his works."

Jesus said, "Men will always go astray, but those who lead

them astray cannot shun responsibility. Remember what I have said about those who stand behind the wrongdoings and foolishness of others, hidden from sight and untouchable by men. It would be better for them to have a millstone hung about their necks and be thrown into the sea than to suffer what they will for leading innocents astray. Be on guard against undutiful inclinations, and work in harmony one with another. If your companion offends you, rebuke him without anger and if he indicates regret, forgive him wholeheartedly. Even though he offend you many times, and is contrite, forgive him."

Some of the twelve said, "These things are difficult to understand and we have the natural failings of men, give us courage and strengthen us in the cause." Jesus replied, "Have faith in what you do, for with faith you could move mountains or cause uprooted trees to replant themselves. All things are possible to those who believe them possible." Nevertheless, He strengthened them by a transfer of Holy Spirit, so they had the power of healing.

Jesus said, "Those who do not build with Me are destroyers of My works, and those who pay lip service only are useless tools. Never judge any man by the words of his mouth and keep away from those who pour them out in a torrent. Have no dealings with those who do their good deeds in public, and shun those who push themselves forward for attention. A man whose problems are small will readily come to be eased of his burden, while he who carries a heavy load is often inconspicuous."

"What you do pays no earthly reward; though the reward elsewhere may be great it is useless claiming one here. If one of you had a man out ploughing, would you say to him on his return, 'Come, sit down and rest'. Is it not more likely you would say, 'Go and clean yourself, get my meal ready and after you have finished go and eat yourself, then go to rest?' Is any employer grateful because those who work for him do the things for which he pays them? So it should be with you. Having carried out your orders and done your duty, you should simply say, 'We have only done the things we were supposed to do'."

"Many will seek to snare you in a net of words, but avoid the meshes spun by their wiles. Never talk about anything not thoroughly understood and honestly believed. The blind cannot lead the blind and if they do, fall into a ditch. No man can walk confidently in darkness without a light. The eye is the lamp of the body and if the lamp is defective the whole body is in gloom. The Holy Spirit is the lamp of the soul, but if it remains unlit it serves no purpose."

"Many will mock and scorn you, saying, 'Fools, we have full stomachs and soft beds, we have everything for our comfort and needs. What have you?' There is little to be said in reply, for wise men do not mock, knowing that gems of wisdom often fall from the lips of fools. Take no heed of these, for they suffer from a spiritual defect, an ailment blinding them to their own deficiencies while exaggerating the failings of others. Do not offer bright jewels to dogs nor place a string of pearls around the necks of swine, or they will be trampled into the ground. The beasts will turn and rend you for not providing bones or husks."

Philip said to Jesus, "Sire, you caution us against anger, yet were You not angry when a man beat his ass with a rod?" Jesus said, "I warn you against anger among brothers or anger relating to yourself, there is a righteous anger which is justified. In all things there are balances and limitations, and to know these you have the Books of Wisdom. If a man comes against you, threatening harm, he is more dangerous if he is calm and silent than if he is unsteady with anger. The silent biting dog is more to be feared than the barking one. Therefore, is it not in your own interests that I teach you self-control?"

Then Judas asked concerning the coming Rule of God, and Jesus answered, "It is like this: A man scatters seed on the ground, day follows day until the grain sprouts and grows. But what goes on in the ground to bring this about is beyond his knowledge. The soil produces the crop by its own methods, nourishing the crop until it ripens. When the corn is ripe, at harvesting time the man reaps and gathers in." Jesus then said "To know the nature of the Rule of God is important but difficult for Me to explain to your

understanding. It is like the small seed which once planted shoots up into a great plant, providing shade for many forms of life. These are able to see and know both the seed and the plant but have no knowledge how one became the other."

"Know that though I am here with you I am not apart from He who inspires Me. That which is in Me is not separate from the Spirit of the Father, and that Spirit is wholly in Me. I express the likeness of the Father and contain His power and substance to the full measure. I am the Spirit outflowing from God, given voice and form. I am the voice and word of that Spirit. I am of that Spirit but not that Spirit. I am the fulfilment of men's hopes and the fulfilment of the Father's wish. As I am so is the Spirit, as I am so shall all His children be, for I am the pattern for all men. I am emptied of worldliness in order to hold the Holy Spirit, and I am an answer to the Father's creative word."

"A pitcher half filled with water would hold less oil than an empty one. If wine is poured into a jar containing water, the wine is diluted. So when men say, 'What purpose does it serve to forgo worldly pleasures?' tell these things to them. If they will not listen, then on their own heads be the illnesses and pains from which they will surely suffer."

The twelve said, "Great is the hope you have given us and great is the inspiration of Your words." Jesus said, "I do not do this of Myself for I have been filled with the power of the Holy Spirit which is part of God. With this He created all things. I come that I may bring light to those who dwell in darkness, to bring to those who are on the brink of death, a knowledge of life, and to bring consolation to those who suffer. I am the Hope of those who despair, the Helper of those who have no guide, the Treasure of the poor and the Healer of the sick. I am the Light of Eternal Life for all who die, and as I am so must you be."

"Go, carry the good tidings without trepidation or fear, without respect for persons, calling all who will listen to follow a path which is direct, narrow and stern. Call them whatever their circumstances, for each one will have something to contribute." Then John said, "Sire, You have taught us many things and armed

our wits. You have taught us how to act towards those who believe in Your cause and those who do not.Yet even among those who most conscientiously follow Your way, even among those who should be brothers, is found jealousy, pettiness, envy and selfishness." Jesus said, "These things are the challenge of life and inseparable from the present rule of man. The test is your ability to change them. The corn will be gathered into the storehouse of the spirit and the chaff cast into the fires of transmutation."

Jesus taught these things to the twelve in a manner different from His other teachings. There were many other things which may be told, but not all were heard with understanding. Peter said, "Let us partake of Your strength, so we can withstand whatever is sent to test us." Jesus said, "When the test comes it is never as expected."

He also said, "The man who says, 'I may be wrong' is always right; the man who says, 'I am certainly right' is always wrong. To avoid a fight is not cowardice and to fight with the assurance of victory is not courage. Weak men often fight and strong men often run, motive is all that matters. To judge anyone by their actions is to judge unfairly."

Then, while they were gathered about Him Jesus said, "Now, who do you think I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are surely God's Anointed." Jesus said, "You are rather rash, but as no mortal disclosure was made to you, fortunate also. Since your name means a rock and you live up to it I will establish foundations for the city of My cause upon you, and neither death nor evil shall overthrow it. To you I give the keys of this city, and the kingdom to which it is the gateway shall welcome you as a prince."

"In as much as I am the Way, the Truth and the Light, I bring you salvation from ignorance. I am the Saviour of all who wander in darkness but who, seeing my Light, follow My lead." One of the twelve said, "Sire You are truly our salvation, our hope and our life." Jesus said, "Many will flock to My cause but few will be chosen to serve; many will follow My way but turn aside at the obstacles. For if any man believe but fail to put his belief into practice, it will be profitless to him. If anyone take one part of My

teachings, shunning the sterner and more inconvenient, the rest will serve no purpose. For it is in the nature of men to accept the easy path and turn aside from the harder one, but there is something in each which tells them this is wrong. Everyone has a spark within, which, fanned by the wind of dedication, will kindle the flame of glory."

One of the twelve said, "Shall we confine our mission to the Jews?" Jesus replied, "Enlightenment is the inheritance of all men, carry the message to all the seventy nations of the Earth." Another asked, "Should we take it to the young and to the old as well? For the thoughts of the young change with every wind, while the old are like seasoned timber into which it is difficult to drive a nail." Jesus said, "Teach each according to his understanding and capacity."

Jesus then said, "Always treat those you meet as you would have them treat you, act towards others as you would have them act towards you. For this is the essence of the law." When Jesus had given these instructions to the envoys, they left, and Jesus went with four disciples to carry the message to other towns.

Chapter Fifteen

JESUS CAME TO A PLACE where He had a kinsman and stayed with him, but on the second day a large crowd gathered outside so it was impossible to remain at peace. These kinfolk were quiet people whose lives followed a tranquil course, for they conformed to the pattern of life imposed upon them. Hearing the clamour of the crowd they became agitated and said, "Surely Jesus must be out of His mind and we should put restraint upon Him, otherwise we will be ridiculed." Just then some important men from Jerusalem spoke to them, and they said among themselves, "This thing is now beyond our control, but surely we shall never live normal lives again."

The men from Jerusalem said to some people standing outside the doorway, "Go away, this Man is possessed by the king of evil spirits and calls on him for help when casting out His subjects." Hearing this, Jesus called to the men from Jerusalem asking them to come outside to where He was. He then asked them, "Can evil cast out evil?" They said, "On this point we have no clear guidance." Jesus then said, "Surely, if a kingdom is divided against itself it must collapse. Likewise, a household split internally soon falls apart. If evil powers counteract each other, are they not like men in an army who fall upon each other with swords, thereby rendering the army ineffective? Set evil in action against evil and nothing except good can result."

Jesus then went into the house and told those inside He was

going to the temple in that place, and one said, "The clothes You wear are travelstained, will You enter the House of God in these?" Jesus replied, "When guests call upon a nobleman in his house they must be fittingly attired, but when workmen call to make repairs they enter in the clothes of their trade."

Jesus spoke to the people in the temple court, saying, "The Perushim occupy the seats of the prophets and should therefore be obeyed. In general they live good lives and you would do well to follow their example, but with many the goodness is only on the outside and they are rotten within. Therefore, by exposing these I serve those who are really good."

"I tell you to beware of hypocrites, self-deceivers and liars, and to be constantly on guard against those who, in the name of righteousness, would mislead you. When inspired to become the voice of God the prophet spoke of these, for he said, "They praise Me with their mouth and give homage with their lips, but I am not in their hearts. They worship only because this has been their upbringing. Such as these do not worship God because they are good, but for the sake of reward and through fear of the unknown'. These are people against whom I have set My face, for their goodness is fair outside but rotten at the core."

"There are others who dig in the darkness, hoping their thoughts are unknown. They delve around in the filth within themselves and say, 'This is pleasant and none sees what we do', but the record of their thoughts is never lost. Yet these, concealing what lies within, set themselves up as leaders of the people who, finding their troubles multiplied, look vainly for the cause. Yet the people only get the leaders they deserve, for those who will only serve goodness cannot be misled by evil."

"There are misguiders who lead the people along devious paths which can never end in contentment. They produce doves' eggs to the people, but when hatched in secret these produce vipers. They fawn upon the rich and notorious, a smile on their faces and a dagger in their hearts, but to the underprivileged they turn a face of harshness."

"The hypocrites, the self-deceivers and the self-centred are

the minions of evil on Earth and are the true enemy opposing the coming of the Rule of God. Let them maintain the upper hand and you will never know the joys of a reborn world. Turn your backs on these wherever you find them, so your contempt is made manifest; but remember, they will be found in the most unexpected places."

"Beware of the self-seekers whose path is over the bodies of those they drag down, if you associate with them you may become a cobblestone for their feet. Avoid the tangled thickets of moneydealing, lest the spiders therein lure you into their webs and suck you dry. The self- seekers are blind to the obligations of life, supposing these to be a profitless burden, but I tell you that anyone who shoulders them courageously and cheerfully will be duly rewarded."

"The cross of life is not easy to bear, for it chafes and weighs down heavily, but unless a man sacrifice himself upon it he shall not rise to glory. Do not seek directions for an easy path, for this is not difficult to find though it has no destination. Follow the harder one, the directions are given in the Holy Books, and at the end you will find sunlit meadows and a region of liveliness."

"I say to you, come, take up My cross and bear it manfully, and I will not leave you unsupported. I teach the strengthening of the spirit in men through purification, repentance and good deeds. The trials of life are many and take numerous forms, some being easily understood for what they are; but others, coming in the guise of gifts, are not so readily detected. This is what the prophet said about those who failed to rise above the tests of life: 'Their cuttings will not take root, the winds of God will blow upon them and they will wither, to be borne away by the whirlwind'."

"A coward lies to those who trust him, for he fears the anger of others. A liar is also a coward, for he follows a path better men would scorn. I have come to winnow the grain from the chaff, and those who follow Me, bearing the burden of My cross, must not be halfhearted in the cause. I separate the sheep from the goats accepting one and rejecting the other, and a sheep does not mate with a goat. I accept the truthful man, he is peaceful within himself,

for whatever is sown in truthfulness will be reaped in content."

"I have not come to point out the place where a treasure trove is hidden but to tell of its existence, the search remains with you. Nevertheless, I give directions which, if followed, cannot fail to uncover it. For is it not written, 'If you desire knowledge as men desire gold and seek Truth with the diligence men display when seeking treasure, you will not be denied knowledge of God'?"

"Lay up treasures in the storehouse of eternity and enjoy them forever. Hoarded silver can buy only pleasure which quickly palls, or things which endure a little while before falling apart or decaying. Only the treasures laid up in Heaven will ensure everlasting glory."

"Keep these things always in mind, for if My words have fallen on barren ground they are wasted. Spread out your roots in the sustaining soil of the new light I bring you, and when the plant of faith grows do not let it be smothered by worldly weeds. Maintain cheerfulness in your heart and its reflection will lighten your countenance; and, smiling, you will be welcome wherever you go."

"Go your ways, but beware of those who speak fairly but hold deceit in their hearts. Beware of hypocrites and deceivers. It is no sin to be blind, but to disguise the blindness and say, 'We see, follow us', is one of the greatest evils."

Chapter Sixteen

AFTER BEING AWAY SOME TIME, the twelve envoys rejoined Jesus and gave their reports, and when they had finished He said, "You have done well, let us go away to a secluded place where we can be alone." Andrew said, "Spare me time to visit my womenfolk, so I can be assured they do not lack food or suffer." Jesus said, "God will provide for those who serve Him faithfully, but men are not always suitable tools in His hand. Go and do whatever has to be done."

The rest set out in a boat, but when they reached their destination a crowd had already assembled. Jesus spoke to the people, teaching in parables, and when at length He wearied dismissed them and went to sit alone on a small hill. Meanwhile, the disciples had put to sea in a boat and as darkness fell tried to row back, but the wind was against them. Jesus, therefore, waded out to them in the darkness, then the wind being in their faces they quickly crossed the sea to a village where many sick and lunatics were brought to be healed.

Going to the place where they were staying, it was then the cool of the evening. Some of the disciples started quarrelling but soon quietened down. When they were all in the house Jesus asked what the argument had been about, but they were silent before him not knowing what to say, for they had been disputing among themselves as to who was the greatest among them next to Jesus. Jesus then said,"Whoever wants to lead must know how to serve

and the humblehearted serve best. A great man is not one who has sought greatness but one whom the need has found great."

Jesus then took the arm of a young child belonging to the house, who had been standing behind Him, and drawing the boy forward said, "Whoever accepts responsibility for a little child such as this accepts Me, and whoever accepts Me accepts My cause. For it is profitless to discuss greatness apart from responsibility, let the one who can accept the most responsibility be the greatest."

After they had eaten, two followers of Jesus came into the house and approached Him, saying, "Sire, we have robbed a rich man, have we not done a good deed? For this gives him a better chance in the life to come. Jesus said, "Even though he used riches wrongly you have done no more than add wrong to wrong. Evil cannot be rectified by evil, no matter what the circumstances." One of the men said, "Sire, I gave all the proceeds to the disinherited, gaining nothing for myself except the fear of death, while the other with me gave only some silver, keeping the rest." Jesus said, "Then your crime was the lesser one but a crime nevertheless."

Jesus dismissed the man and said to the disciples, "No man can push another into goodness or force spiritual credits upon him, men are brought to goodness by guidance and example." Matthew said, "These men have sons, what of them? For is it not in the law that sons shall suffer for the misdeeds of their fathers? Where is the justice in this?"

Jesus said, "The sense of words changes with their transmission, and have I not told you that by taking one part of the law and setting it apart from the rest leads to error? Only by diligently reading the whole word by word can it be understood."

"Given a single thread from a carpet, could any one of you know the pattern? It is the transgressions of the fathers which cause the children to suffer, for not only are there things which must not be done but there are things which are to be done. Also things which have to be guarded against."

"If a man fail to instruct his children or permit them to grow

up unruly, he is a transgressor against the law, and is it not obvious this affects the children? If a man choose his wife for her beauty and charm, because she pleases him and not for her wifely and motherly attributes, he transgresses against the law. Does not the effect of this fall upon his children? If a man steal, God will not chastise the children; but if that man be caught and crucified, his wife sold into bondage, will not his children suffer?"

"The Law of God, as given in the Books of Wisdom, is unlike the laws of men. A man is responsible not only for what he does but for what he fails to do, and though he spend his whole life in prayer, at places of righteousness, but overlook his obligations under the Greater Law, he is not free of transgression. The deeds of men are like pebbles thrown into a pool, sending out ever widening ripples, and I assure you that all harm done by the ripples shall be accounted against he who caused them, no matter how far distant it occur."

"This is the law: Whatever a man transmit to his children, even down to the tenth generation, that shall be accounted against him. Likewise, if a man fail to do things he should for his children, that too will not be overlooked."

"When the day of assessment comes it will be like a net cast into the sea, which gathers up every kind of fish, some wholesome and others not. When full it is drawn ashore and the wholesome fish are placed in baskets, while the unwholesome are thrown aside. So it is at the time of assessment, the good go in one direction and the transgressors in another."

One of the disciples said, "Sire, it is easier for some than for others, the rich are not tempted to steal, but many a poor man must steal or see his children starve." Jesus said, "The transgressions of the rich lie mainly with the things they fail to do, those of the poor in things they find it difficult to avoid. The justice of God takes all things into account."

"Is it not written, 'Toil not to lay up riches which make eagle's wings for themselves and fly away?" And it is also stated, 'Some are truly rich though they dwell in poverty, while others are poor amid their riches'. Those who wallow in their wealth,

enjoying it as pigs enjoy mud, are like sheep which, buried in darkness, never live again in the light. The man who gains privileges and wealth in this world but lacks wisdom to utilise them to his true benefit, suffers a fate no better than the beasts which perish."

"True wisdom is filling your lives with things conferring a lasting benefit, and the goodness of life cannot be assessed according to abundance of possessions. There is nothing whatsoever in this world which cannot be used as a stepping stone to a life of glory, and riches are no exception, but few men are wise enough to overcome the test they present."

"There was once a rich man who was always robed in purple and fine linen, whose days were spent in entertaining and feasting. Outside his gate sat a beggar so hungry he would have been satisfied with the scraps of food thrown aside from the rich man's table. The beggar died at his hour and his soul found itself in the company of the saintly fathers of his race. The rich man also died and after his assessment found himself in the company of those who suffered. Filled with misery he raised his eyes to the glorious place beyond his reach and there, bathed in bright light, he recognised the beggar he had spurned, in the company of a Great Soul. The rich man cried out, 'My Father, send a word of comfort, for here I suffer in filth and squalor'. The Great One answered him with compassion in his voice, 'My son, recall your life on Earth when you enjoyed all the good things it were possible to obtain, and think of the difference between what the beggar and you had. Now he is the one who is comforted and surrounded by beauty and cleanliness, while you live in filth and degradation. But it was you who made the choice of place for your future'.

'Still, this is not all, for while you could have reached out a helping hand to him on Earth, here there is an impassable barrier between those of you who are in that place and those in this.' Then the man who had once been rich said, 'I beg you, send messengers to my family and brothers so they may be warned of what lies in store for them before it is too late'. The Great Soul replied, 'They have the teachings of the law which carry sufficient

message and warning, let them take heed of this'. He who suffered replied, 'No, this they will not heed any more than I did, for their days are filled with worldly distractions; but if someone were to return from the dead it would bring these things to their attention and they would definitely take notice'. The Great Soul answered, 'Nothing can serve them better than the teachings of the law, not even one returning from the dead, in fact this would serve them ill. For if their goodness stemmed only from proofs such as this it would be devoid of merit and therefore worthless at the assessment'."

Jesus said, "This is the manner whereby you will teach the people, but do this according to their understanding. In one place you will tell the parable in a certain manner and in another place you will tell it differently, making sure the message never varies. The design inscribed on the outside of a pitcher makes it attractive to some but not to others. This is unimportant, for it does not affect the contents."

After this Jesus took His disciples to Tiberias. From there He and the twelve went through Zebulon to Tyre on the Western Sea, where they stayed among fishermen in a village by the narrow waters.

Chapter Seventeen

JESUS AND THE TWELVE worked with the fishermen and on ships bringing goods from all parts of the world, even from the cities beyond, and during this time He did not draw attention to Himself. Then one day, while in the part of Tyre called 'The Place of Purple' He came upon two men in argument among several others. He said to them, "No disagreement can be settled justly by blows, while loud words confuse the issue. If your brother does wrong reprove him quietly, but let it be between you two alone. If the matter cannot be settled between you, then seek two men acceptable to both and let them decide the issue."

By the time Jesus had dealt with this matter a crowd had gathered and someone in it called out, "Sire, come with me to my brother and tell him that the estate left by our father should be shared with me." Jesus called him forward and said, "I am a Teacher, no man has given Me authority to decide such matters, when things are done properly there is less likelihood of repercussions." Then Jesus turned to the gathering and said, "Take care always to guard against all kinds of greed and acquisitiveness, for no man's happiness can be assured by his possessions. In fact, much wealth is the father of sleepless nights."

"There was a certain rich man whose fields were fertile, yielding heavy crops. Seeing the bounty of the land he decided there was insufficient space to store it, and had his barns and storehouses pulled down so bigger ones could be erected. Into

these he stacked everything, until the new buildings were packed full. When this was completed he relaxed, saying to himself, 'Now I have ample laid up for all my future needs and can eat, drink and enjoy my good fortune'. But that night he was called to his accounting in another life and no part of his worldly goods could be taken. Now, who benefited by all he had accumulated? This is how it is with those who accumulate worldly wealth but remain spiritual paupers."

Jesus then turned to two of the twelve who stood beside Him and said, "This is why I tell you not to unduly concern yourselves with food and clothing. There is so much more to life than eating, and the body requires more than clothes. Look at the wild birds which live happily from day to day, and learn from them. Have no doubts, My friends, for you are certainly heirs to glory, with an unassailable treasurehouse in Heaven."

"Be prepared for whatever comes, your clothes fitting the occasion and your lamp lit, like servants awaiting the master's return from visiting, ready to open the door immediately. The master is gratified on finding his servants anticipating his arrival, and does not fail to reward them. Thieves keep clear of houses where the owners have made provision for their coming, but go in search of those unguarded or where the occupants sleep. Therefore, always hold yourself in readiness, for you never know from day to day what will eventuate."

Peter said, "Sire, is this meant for us or does it apply to everyone?" Jesus answered, "Who does the master choose to fill a position of trust? Is it not the man who works diligently though not under the eye of the master? I can assure you this is the man who will be promoted. If however, the man in whom trust is vested thinks, 'I am not being observed by the master', and gets drunk, or is careless about what is done, be sure the master will catch him out. Any servant who knows what to do but fails to do it should not go unchastised, but those who do not know what is expected of them cannot be justly criticised. From the man who is given much responsibility much will be expected; for the greater trust placed in a man the greater should be the return."

A man in the crowd said to Jesus, "We have heard of Your teachings and that You herald the Rule of God, tell us about this." Jesus said, "There is the Kingdom of the Spirit and the Kingdom of the Flesh. God rules the first Himself, but the second He rules through His viceroy, man. But man tries to set himself up as an independent ruler, making his own laws and setting aside those of his Sovereign. When the viceroy ceases to rebel and governs in accord with the decrees of the Sovereign, that will be the Rule of God." The man said, "This teaching is beyond our understanding. We have the law which comes from the mouthpieces of God." Jesus said, "Of course you have the law, but it is either disobeyed, ignored or circumvented. Therefore, it is nullified and rendered ineffective."

"I have come to gather the lost sheep, bringing them back into the fold, which is the will of God. I have come to cleanse the Earth with purifying fire, but though I have struck the sparks the tinder is not yet ignited. I travel a stony road, but the greatest ordeal lies ahead.You may think in your hearts that I come to bring peace to the Earth and concord among men, and this is true, for such will be under the Rule of God. However, before this comes about those who oppose it must be defeated. Therefore, I come to arm those who are loyal to the cause, to put a sword into the hands of men and stinging words on the tongues of women. Henceforth, families will be divided against themselves and brother will be separated from brother, and father set against son."

Some in the crowd said among themselves, "These words we can understand, truly this is the One promised who will deliver us from our oppressors." Jesus said, "Bide your time and all things will be made clear." A scribe in the crowd said, "It seems You speak with hidden meanings. How are we to interpret these teachings?"

Jesus said, "You are so accustomed to devious thinking, trying to make a 'Yes' into a 'No' to suit your convenience, that when given Truth you pull it apart seeking to find something else behind it. Unless you accept these things as would a child you cannot hope to enter the Kingdom of God."

"When you see clouds coming in from the West you say, 'Soon there will be rain', and this forecast proves to be correct.

When the Southwind blows you say, 'It will be extremely hot', and again your prediction is right. What hypocrites you are, so quick to interpret some signs while closing your eyes to others less to your liking. You can interpret the omens in Earth and sky but close your eyes to those indicating present trends."

Someone in the crowd said, "We have the failings of men, should we be condemned for these? Jesus replied, "As sons of God you inherit His substance and are heirs to glory. Think less of earthly weaknesses and more of godly strength."

Another in the crowd asked Jesus about unjustified suffering, and might not His cause bring this upon the heads of His followers? Someone else said, "What about the Galileans who died in resisting the efforts of Pilate to appropriate the temple offerings, so he could bring water to the city of Jerusalem?" Jesus said, "The Galileans and the Governor did right in their own eyes, the ones seeking to serve God, and the other, men. But these things are not matters to be placed at issue, for whoever serves one serves the other and there is no clash of interests."

"Can you believe that the Galileans who suffered as they did were worse than others in Galilee? This is not so, they suffered for no wrongdoing but through misguidance. Calamity strikes capriciously. Do you think those who died when the tower fell on them at Siloam deserved death more than the others? Life is full of uncertainties so men may be made aware of the need for repentance, knowing the day of assessment may be near or far. Be sure of one thing: There will be no discrimination among you on the assessment day, all will get their fitting reward."

Then one in the crowd shouted, "Tell us about the Kingdom of Heaven for surely if we are going there it is well to know what it is like." Jesus said, "If you were going to a distant city, which would be most beneficial, a description of it or details concerning the route? Then, too, is it not important to prepare for your reception? For if a man residing in a palace describe the place, this serves no purpose to one who will have to beg for scraps and sleep in the gutters."

"The road to Heaven may be likened to ten young women who, taking lamps, went out to meet a bridegroom, five being

irresponsible and five reliable by nature. The irresponsible ones left everything to the last minute and snatched up their lamps forgetting the oil containers were nor filled. Because the bridegroom was delayed all the young women lay down to sleep, but at midnight there was a shout to say the bridegroom was coming and to go out and meet him. The young women all arose and trimmed their lamps, but the irresponsible ones, finding theirs going out, said to the others, 'Let us have some of your oil, for we forgot to fill the containers'. The others replied, 'We cannot do this, for we do not have enough oil for all, and if we share with you there will be insufficient to light the way. It is better we provide light all the way with five lamps than we all provide light for just a short distance'. The irresponsible ones hastened to the oil vendor but he would not serve them, and while they were away the bridegroom arrived and those who were ready lighted his way and joined the guests at the wedding, the doors then being closed. Later, when the irresponsible ones returned and stood outside shouting to be let in the doorkeeper said, 'Who are you, what purpose do you serve? Go away'. Therefore I say to you, be always alert, your spiritual lamps trimmed and filled with the oil which gives eternal light, for you never know the hour when you will be called."

They who stood about Jesus asked, "Who is chosen to enter Heaven and how is the selection made?" Jesus explained in this manner, "A king decided to collect all debts due and ordered those who owed money to come before him. One of these was so heavily indebted that he was in no position to repay, so the king ordered that he be sold into slavery to satisfy the debt. The debtor begged the king to be patient, saying that given time every last farthing would be paid. The king, taking pity on him, released the debtor from his obligations. A few days afterwards the king's debtor met a poor man who owed him just a small amount and the king's debtor took hold of him and said, 'Repay the money due to me at once, for I have no patience with defaulters'. The poor man begged him to be patient, saying that given time he would repay in full, but the other would not have it and had the poor man committed to prison. The poor man's friends reported the matter to the king who

had his former debtor brought before him, and he said, 'You villain, because you pleaded with me to have pity I released you from the whole of your debt. Had I not done so you would have thought me harsh, yet what consideration have you shown?' Then the king condemned the man to severe punishment until the whole of the debt was paid. In this manner men are chosen for Heaven, and therefore I say very earnestly: Deal with others as you would he dealt with, not holding one law in your heart for yourself and letting another issue from your lips for others."

"Prepare yourselves for entry into Heaven, for this can only be done here and is the purpose of Earth. Do not think because you are not immediately chastised your iniquities are overlooked. A sower went out into his grainfield and sowed with good seed, but during the night an enemy came and strewed wheatlike weeds over the ground and went away. After the wheat blades had sprouted and the stalks began to form wheatheads, the weeds among them were revealed. Then the field labourer went to the landholder and said, 'The field was sown with good seed and yet it is now full of weeds, shall we go and pull them up?' The landholder answered, 'Someone who wishes to harm me has done this, but in pulling up the weeds you may do more damage. Let both grow together until harvesting time, then the reapers can separate the weeds from the wheat, stacking the weeds for burning and gathering the wheat into the granary'.

"Therefore, because transgressors go unpunished here, do not think they are overlooked or that there is not a day of accounting. Not a single deed or thought, whether it be good or bad, is overlooked." One in the crowd said, "But our thoughts harm no one." Jesus replied, "Only yourself, for thoughts mould, strengthening or weakening the spirit. Is it not written, 'The nature of a man is formed according to his thoughts'?"

Jesus was asked, "What then is the spirit, for the Holy Books do not make this clear." He replied, "The spirit of man may be likened to a date seed planted in the darkness of the ground, giving no indication to anyone not knowing its nature of what it will become. When the tree springing from it is full grown it

spreads out in the sunshine, a haven for birds and a source of pleasure for men. Or it may be likened to leaven which a woman places in a bushel of flour, there it spreads throughout the whole to change its nature."

"It is like a treasure buried in waste ground. The plot had no value until it was rumoured that a treasure was there, then men bid against each other to obtain it. While within the egg a chick is self-sustaining, but once the shell is broken it has to be fed. So it is with the spirit of man and the Holy Spirit. I assure you that every plant not nourished by the waters of life will wither and die."

Several in the crowd said, "Tell us again about those who enter the Kingdom of Heaven." Jesus replied with these parables, "Admittance may be likened to a wedding feast prepared by a king for his son. He despatched servants inviting many guests, but though each was told, 'The feast is preparing even now, the geese and beasts are being roasted, the bread is in the ovens and there is wine on the tables', yet those invited ignored the messengers, saying they were too busy with their own affairs, while they abused or even ill-treated them. When this came to the ears of the king he sent soldiers to take those who had ill-treated his messengers, and confined them in dismal dungeons."

"The king then said to his servants, 'Though I prepared a sumptuous feast, those I invited were unworthy of the honour I paid them. Go out again and invite any who will come'. The servants went out into the streets, returning with many persons. However, while they were all seated at the table the king noticed one who behaved badly, using lewd language to those beside him. The king called two servants and bid them take the man and throw him into the dungeons with the others. But to make sure, he went to one where there was the most filth so he would be in his own element. I have said before, though many are invited few are chosen. Now I say, many choose not to come."

"There is another way for separating the wheat from the chaff illustrated by this parable. A man left for a distant country, but before departing he called his servants to him and entrusted them with his store of gold. To one he gave three bars of gold, to

another two bars and to another one bar, each receiving gold in accordance with his capabilities. The servant who received three bars of gold went and exchanged these for silver, spending this in pleasure and high living, thinking that with all this silver he could have a really good time. The servant who received two bars was a cautious man and he buried his gold in a safe place, for he thought it best not to take chances with it. The servant who had received one bar went and bought goods which he resold, and by this and other efforts he obtained another gold bar, for he thought to himself, 'As the master did not think me as capable as the others, I must prove I am'."

When the master returned he called his servants for an accounting, and the one who had received three bars of gold said, 'Good master, with so much wealth I could not resist temptation and spent it enjoying myself, never thinking about the day of accounting'. The master said, 'You are an untrustworthy scoundrel', and he placed him in bondage until the whole of the value was repaid. The man who had received two bars of gold said, Master, I knew you were a hard man and was afraid to take any risks, so I safeguarded the gold, here it is. The master said, 'you have been neither good nor bad but took your ease while I was away, go about your job but expect no promotion'. The man who received one bar of gold said, 'Having only one bar I increased it to two, for I knew you would need gold on your return and have been a good master'. To this one the man said, "Well done, you have proved worthy of my trust, I will now place you in charge of my treasury."

"One of the people gathered about Jesus said, "How should I treat my servants, for I have one who is troublesome, though perhaps it is his youth." Jesus then told this parable, "A man had a garden plot set aside for vines, but a self-planted fig tree grew among them. In the fruiting season the man came to this plot accompanied by his gardener who said, 'This fig tree is interfering with the vines, if it fruited it might not matter but as it does not would it be best to cut it down? For it is only taking goodness from the soil, which could be used more profitably by the vines'.

The man said, 'Leave it for another season but give it a little attention, then if it fails to fruit next season cut it down. I like figs, but a new cutting might take a long time to mature, and this tree, having chosen its own situation, may yet prove more profitable in this plot than the vines'."

Jesus said, "If a fig tree grow among vines it can be left, for both produce good fruit; but if it grow among thorns, then these are cut down and the fig tree left on its own. If a man hire three labourers for his vineyard and there is work only for two, he dismisses the one least worthy of his hire. Yet everyone who labours must be paid his due, but if one pour less than full measure into the task he cheats no less than one who deceives at the weighing."

Some self-righteous people who picked pieces out of the law to suit their convenience, as a child picks segments from a pomegranate, and lived by these, ridiculed Jesus, but He said to them, "You who try to impress others with your righteousness are hypocrites, but what goes on in your minds is not overlooked. Admiration and popularity may benefit you in this world but count for nothing in the world to come, unless worthily earned."

"I come to herald the Rule of God when such as you will be swept aside by those who serve His cause." Some in the crowd shouted, 'Who will You take to serve it?' Jesus replied, "When the trumpets sound the rallying call and two men are reaping in a field, one will be taken and the other ignored. Two scribes will be writing in a room, one will be taken and the other ignored. Two women will be grinding corn, one will be taken and the other ignored."

Someone said, 'Where will they be taken?' Jesus answered, "Vultures gather where the carcass lies and bees where the flowers grow. Flies are drawn to stinking meat. Brave men converge on the battlefield, while cowards seek their hideouts. The day of decision will come like a roll of thunder, and on that day those serving the cause of God will be separated from those who serve the powers of darkness." There were many other parables which Jesus used in this place, to bring understanding to the people. He taught simply so all could grasp what He said, but afterwards when alone with the twelve He explained things differently, revealing a deeper meaning.

Chapter Eighteen

JESUS AND THE TWELVE left the shores of the Western Sea, and after preaching in many places came to the Sea of Galilee where Jesus and seven of the envoys took ship with Nathaniel's brother and passed over into Dalmantha.

About this time Herod Antipas heard about the activities of Jesus whose fame had spread, for He was unlike the other teachers. A rumour had started that He was John of the Wilderness raised to life, and this explained His powers; for only in one able to come back from the dead could such an abundance of power manifest. Most thought He was one of the old prophets returned but were unable to explain His powers. Though these things brought fear to Herod's heart, he took no action. Others said, 'The same is Jesus who was born Joshua, son of Joseph and Mary, claiming to be a summoner dedicating people to serve the cause of God, that a kingdom under His rule may come to Earth'.

When the boat carrying Jesus and the seven with Him came to the shore, it was drawn up near to some women who were washing, and one shouted, 'Glory to God and blessed be the One through whom He manifests'. Jesus said, "Glory is not yours to give, neither does the Source of Glory need it, therefore your words are empty of meaning, give service instead." Another woman cried out, 'Blessed are the breasts that suckled You'. Jesus answered, "The blessed are those who hear the words of God's messengers and obey them."

Passing along the beach Jesus and three disciples came to where a group of people stood, and they were of those who walked in the light of the law, but they were self-deceivers who trimmed the lamp to suit their convenience. One said, "If you are really sent from God show us some sign as proof then we can believe what you say." Jesus said, "Why are you always demanding proof? Certainly, this generation is undeserving of proof. If you are invited to dine with a man, do you ask him to prove his food is good? If you were genuine my words would strike a responsive chord in your heart, and you would know. If I drew aside the curtains to reveal the glory that is Heaven and you believed, would your belief bear the fruit of goodness? It would be like unseasoned timber or untempered iron."

A crowd started to gather and Jesus returned to the boat, and as people began to jostle Him He ordered it to be taken out a little way. As He was getting into it a scribe pushed forward, saying, "Let me join You and I will follow wherever You go." Jesus said, "Foxes have holes and birds have nests, but the Servant of Man has nowhere to lay His head, not even a board is offered to Him here. If you are sincere in your offer let this be the place of your labours, for you are not a hardy man." Another man with him said, "Then let me come, but may I first have time to bury my father?" Jesus answered, "What service can the living render the dead? Leave the dead to their own kind."

The boat was taken to another place, then it was discovered that as no bread had been obtained previously there was insufficient to provide a good meal for everyone. While they were arguing about how it should be distributed Jesus said, "Let those who get some take care their piece does not contain the leaven of the Perushim or of Herod." Jesus, seeing they looked blankly at Him said, "Do you not understand? When wholesome even a morsel of bread will nourish, but if it contain bad leaven to turn it sour it will be bitter in the mouth and nourish no one. Eleven out of twelve among the Perushim are good, but it is the bad who contaminate the whole and leave a bitter taste in the mouth."

When the boat drew into the shallows some of those with

Jesus went to get food, and a crowd gathered about Him, so Jesus told a parable often repeated. "A sower went into his cornfield carrying seed in his apron, and he scattered it about so some fell in the open and was eaten by the birds. Other seed fell on stony ground and sprouted quickly, but as it could not put down roots it quickly withered. Some fell among thistles where it was smothered before reaching maturity. Still others fell on good ground, and having ripened produced a bountiful harvest. This parable is simple to understand and I will explain it to you. I am the Sower and the seeds are My words. Some of you standing here in the open listen but close your hearts to the message. With you My words are like the seed eaten by the birds. With others My words are like the seed falling on stony ground, for though they receive them hopefully they are weakwilled and shallow-minded. Thus, when their belief is tested they give way immediately. Still others receive the words, but the message is like the seed sown among thistles; they hear and understand, but because of their daily cares or a craving for worldly things the words of the message become overgrown and perish. Lastly, there are those who hear the words of the message and welcome them. It is in these that the bountiful harvest is produced."

A man nearby in the crowd said, "No doubt You are a worthy Teacher, but we have the teachings of the prophets and the laws of Moses. Are these not good?" Jesus answered him, "Certainly, these are good, but what too many make of them is not good. There are many among you who know the teachings of the Great Souls, but though words issue from your mouths your hearts are evil. Yet you cannot hide the underlying impurity, for whatever is stored in the heart colours that which issues from the mouth. Words from a pure heart are good, but words from a befouled one are evil. I tell you that not one reckless or inconsiderate word is spoken which does not enter into the accounting. Out of your own mouths will come the words assigning you to the Place of Glory or to the Place of Purification."

Now, those who had gone to obtain food having returned Jesus and those with Him sat around and began to eat. One of the

Perushim who stood nearby expressed surprise that He let His disciples eat without first washing their hands, though there was plenty of water beside them. Jesus said, "This is typical of many today, you carefully clean your eating utensils and choose the best food, but these are external things and obvious, inside you are filled with greed and deceit. Never mind outward appearances, but make sure you are clean all the way through."

"I assure you of this, everything that is hidden will one day be revealed, and every secret thing will be made known. The words spoken in darkness will be heard in the light of day, and what has been whispered behind closed doors will be shouted from the housetops."

Turning to His disciples sitting about Him Jesus said, "Do not be afraid of these people, for the worst they can do is to drive the life from the body. If you must be afraid of anything let it be your own frailties, for if you give in to these you suffer for it long after the body has fallen apart. Are not five sparrows sold for a single coin? Yet each one is known to God, for nothing living does not participate in life, and this is maintained by the Holy Spirit. For just as fish live in the waters of the sea, so are men maintained in the Living Spirit."

Speaking to those who had spoken previously Jesus said, "Woe to you, self-deceivers who are false interpreters of the law. You are like unmarked graves which men walk over in innocence, unaware they are being defiled. Yet nothing from outside can ever enter into a man and sully his soul; it is what festers within him which comes out to reveal his uncleanliness. The things which defile a man, such as fornication, malice, envy, obscenity and adultery, come from a weeping ulcer within the mind. The uncleanliness within a man is like a stone dropped in water, the ripples going out from him to contaminate others."

"To all outward appearances many of you live good lives, but inwardly you are full of hypocrisy and deceit. You erect memorials over the graves of those who spoke with the voice of God, and decorate the monuments to the martyrs who died unjustly. You say, 'Had we lived in those times we would never have done the

things our forefathers did'. But do you take care to ensure your children never have cause to say the same about you? Therefore, do not set your standards by those days but according to the better ones in the days of your children."

One of the people who were there said, "We have heard that You teach the coming Rule of God and claim knowledge of the Kingdom of Heaven. Tell us about these things." Jesus said, "The Rule of God is not something which will come suddenly, nor will it bring about a violent change. It is not a change of surroundings but a change of heart. The changed conditions will be brought about by changes in the heart. No man can say, 'It is here' or 'It is there'. It is here but waiting recognition. Just as others have heralded My coming so do I herald the coming Rule of God, but its establishment does not depend on anything done by God but on the actions of men. The Kingdom of Heaven is where God rules in Spirit, but there is that within each man which can extend the Kingdom of Heaven. When this is drawn out of men while they are on Earth and established here, then the Kingdom of Heaven will embrace the Earth. When the Rule of God is established on Earth, then will the Kingdom of Heaven come down so Heaven and Earth are united in one."

A rich man standing by said, "We cannot understand these things and they confuse us, just tell me what I must do to enjoy eternal life." Jesus said, "By your attire you are among those privileged to enjoy wealth. What do you do with it?" The man replied, "I do as others, getting the most out of it and enjoying life to the full." Jesus said, "You would be better off selling all you possess and giving the proceeds to the poor, only thus can you discover yourself and benefit from eternal life." The rich man's companion said, "Wise Teacher, what of me? I conform to every verse of the law, I pray every day and give generously to the poor." Jesus said, "Have you ever been hungry or slept on the street or gone unclothed? "The man said, "No, why should I?" Jesus said, "You deceive yourself and are a hypocrite besides. How can you say you comply with the law and teachings of the prophets? Is it not stated in the law that you should love your neighbour as

yourself? Yet all about you there are people who are hungry, clothed in rags and homeless. Your house is filled with good things far exceeding your moderate needs, and all you hand out are a few coins and a morsel of food. It is the duty and obligation of such as you to see no man suffers hunger and privation in your neighbourhood." Turning to a disciple sitting at His side Jesus said, "Simon, son of Joanna, let this be your teaching: It is easier for a camel to enter into the city by the needle's eye than for a rich man to enter into the Glory of Heaven."

The rich man turned away and left, and another who was there said, "Sire, just what is meant by my neighbour?" Jesus then told this parable. "A man had found it necessary to travel the road to Jerico going out from Jerusalem. Along the way he was attacked by footpads who stripped him naked, beat him up and after taking all he possessed left him half-dead by the roadside. A short time later a priest came along the same road, and seeing the injured man lying there passed by on the other side, for he feared defilement. Another self-righteous man came along but hastened by, thinking, 'I would help if I could, but he is nearly dead and I am no physician. Better for me to push on and tell someone'. A merchant came by alone, but seeing the man lying there thought, 'Perhaps the robbers are still around and I should not dismount. Besides I wear fine clothes which would be spoiled'."

"Now, a lowly Samaritan travelling the same road came upon the man lying there, and his heart was moved with pity. So he tore strips off his tunic and bound the injured man's wounds. Then, lifting the man he set him on his own ass, bringing him to an inn and attending to his needs. When departing the next morning he said to the innkeeper, 'Here is some silver, look after this man and if the payment is insufficient I will settle the bill on my way back'. Which of these four in your opinion acted as a neighbour should towards the helpless man?" The man who had questioned Jesus said, "Why, surely the man who took compassion on the stricken man." Jesus said, "Now you know your neighbour, go and act likewise towards men."

Leaving that place Jesus and those with Him went by boat to

another shore on the Sea of Galilee, arriving on the morning of the Sabbath. As Jesus was going into the place of worship, a woman, bent double without the ability to straighten herself, came and begged Jesus to heal her. He put one hand under her chin and the other on her back and straightened her up. She went away filled with happiness.

The Levite who conducted the worship noticed this, and seeing the woman inside said to her, "Six days are set aside for work, but the Sabbath is sacred and you should not have sought healing on that day." Jesus, overhearing this, waited outside for the Levite, and when he came said, "What a hypocrite you are. What member of your flock does not loose his cattle or ass from their stalls and water them on the Sabbath? Also, are the cows not milked and the hogs fed? They are not left to suffer, yet you could deny relief to this poor woman because it is the Sabbath." Hearing this many of the people supported Jesus, and he preached to them.

A blind man was brought to Jesus while He preached. He took the blind man apart from the crowd and, moistening His thumbs, drew them across the blind man's eyes. The man gave a sudden cry and screwed up his eyes, but Jesus said, "Open your eyes and tell Me what you see." The man did so and said, "I can just tell it is light but cannot distinguish anything." Jesus then covered the man's eyes with His hands, and after withdrawing them said, "What do you see now?" The man replied, "O Sire, I can see everything, though it is not steady."

Some time later the envoys who had been away rejoined Jesus bringing with them a disciple who had deserted Jesus in Endor. He was named Barnabas, and seeing him Jesus was overcome with joy and welcomed him warmly, whereupon two of those who had come with him went aside and were sullen, for they had not been received in this manner. Calling the twenty-two men who were there with Him Jesus addressed them as follows:

"A man had two sons, and one day the youngest came to him and said 'Father, I want to go away from here, therefore give me the inheritance which would one day be mine so I can take it with me'. So the father divided his estate and gave the youngest son his

portion. This was then sold and the youngest son departed to a distant city where he dissipated the money on women and riotous living. After his money had gone he found that no one wanted to know him, and soon he was completely destitute."

"No work being available for him in the city he went outside, but the only job he could obtain was that of a swineherd. Often, when he saw the pigs gorging themselves, his own stomach aching with hunger, he would think, 'If only I could bring myself to eat the pigswill it would ease my hunger. What a fool I have been, for here I am worse off than any of my father's employees. I will go back to him, admitting my failure as a son, for he never withheld anything from me and let me go my own way when this was what I wanted'. So he set off and returned to his father's estate."

"His father saw him coming while he was still far off, and seeing his son footsore and weary the father's heart was filled with compassion. He ran out to meet him and embraced him warmly. The son was stricken with remorse and said, 'Father, I have done wrong but will do my best to make amends. I am unworthy to be treated as a son, but let me work for you as a servant'. But the father led him home and called out to the servants, 'Here is my son, bring him a change of clothing, get a ring for his hand and sandals for his feet, go and kill the fattening calf and roast it, for we are going to celebrate his return with a feast. I thought my son was lost, but he has returned and I am happy'."

"Now, the elder son had been out in the fields all day, and drawing close to the house at dusk he was puzzled to hear the sounds of music and laughter. Passing one of the servants he enquired what it was all about and the servant replied, 'Your father has ordered a celebration for the safe return of your brother'. This made the elder son so angry that he would not go into the house, and when his father came out to see why the son said, 'Over the years I have served you faithfully and you know you can rely upon me, yet you have never even put on a feast of goatmeat for me and my friends. Now this prodigal comes running back because he has squandered everything on harlots and gambling, and you immediately have a great feast of celebration."

"The father said,"My son, you are my right hand and I know you have never let me down. I depend upon you and all I have is yours, but it is a special occasion, for the one I thought was lost to me has returned. This does not lessen my affection and regard for you, but he is weak and needs support while you are strong and do not require such displays of affection'." Jesus put His arms around two disciples and said, "My friends, when the going gets tough and the road is long some collapse by the wayside. It is these who need encouragement, and it is not always easy to admit failure. When a sheep becomes separated from the flock and is lost among the thornbushes, does not a good shepherd leave the rest and go in search of the one which has gone astray? This does not mean he loves it more than the others, nor does it lessen his love for each of them."

It was some days later, at another place, that a follower named Joses said to Jesus, "Sire, if a man cheat another is he punished for the cheating or for the harm he has done to the other man?" Jesus said, "Speak of punishment only to the people, for this accords with their understanding. On Earth men's deeds are weighed on scales balanced between reward and punishment, but these work inaccurately. In the Kingdom of the Spirit the measure of assessment is a man's earthly life. You are now on the balances, do not be found wanting."

"A man who can be trusted in small matters can also be trusted with greater things. The man whose transgressions are petty would commit much greater ones if given the opportunity, or if he had greater courage. The purpose of life is to establish a man's credentials, for if he is found unreliable in dealing with things of this world, which quickly pass on the wings of days, how can he be trusted with things of glory in the Kingdom of Heaven?"

"For glory is the garment with which each one who comes to the Kingdom of Heaven will be clothed, and each one who comes will be given attire and station according to the credentials established on Earth."

These and many other things were taught to the disciples by Jesus, but only one recorded them.

Chapter Nineteen

TAKING ONLY THE TWELVE ENVOYS and a few women who were also followers, Jesus set out for Caesarea Philippi, a city renamed by the Tetrach Philip when seeking Roman patronage.

One eventide, while on the way Jesus said to the twelve, "Who do the people in the places we pass through think I am?" They were not agreed, some saying the people believed Him to be the Deliverer and some the Enlightener. Others said the people believed Him to be the Chosen One, while some said that many thought He was John of the Wilderness, for sometimes it seemed his spirit had entered Jesus. Jesus said, "Who do you think I am?" Again they were not agreed, and Jesus said, "I am He whom all men need, whomever they seek. Call a thing by a hundred names and it remains the same. However, each of you, keep your own conception in your own heart and discuss it with no one."

Later, at a house at Balos, they were discussing to people's expectations for the Chosen One, and Judas said to Jesus, "If You are truly He, then the people will believe and follow You, for the prophesies in the Holy Books must be fulfilled. He will surely come and I believe You are He. I believe the reborn world is at hand and the day of the people's salvation is near." John said, "It is foreordained that the Chosen One will suffer death by violence but will rise triumphant above it, to manifest again as proof that death is not the destined end." Jesus said, "Perhaps I am the Chosen

One, for will He not be all things to all men?" Peter said, "Sire, we are Your friends and You are our guiding light, the hope of our lives. Do not say such things, for we could not bear to lose You."

Jesus answered, "I must bear the cross of life and on Me it lies more heavily than on others. Each must do whatever he may be called upon to do, and great causes demand great deeds and sacrifices." Then He said to Peter, "Do not be so blinded by worldliness that you cannot believe the Spirit can rise above the claims of the flesh. If you are, then it would be better for you to come no further." To the others He said, "Do not view these things as men do, but see them through the eyes of God."

Coming to a village Jesus ate while a small crowd gathered, and there He addressed the people, saying, "If any of you intend to become followers of Mine, you must put aside any thoughts of self and carry your own burden of suffering without complaint. If a man worry too much about his own safety and comfort he gains nothing. But if he sacrifice these for the sake of My cause he will not lose. What profit can a man make by gaining all that the world has to offer, in exchange for the welfare of his own soul? What can he take from his gains to buy back what has been lost? Therefore take care, for I give fair warning. If anyone in this adulterous and depraved generation choose to ignore My teachings, that person may find himself ignored when seeking entry into the state of glory. I can also tell you that some are here who will realise the nature of Heaven before undergoing the experience of death."

Someone there said, "Adultery is kept in check by stoning, how can the punishment be increased to prevent it?" Jesus said, "If a tree is cut down it will spring up in many places from the root. Evil is overcome by digging out the root of evil. Adultery has many causes, but if a man marry a woman who has fornicated can he revile her for sorrow he has brought upon his own head? The dowry of a chaste woman is so much higher, but if a man accept what she brings and revile her for what she has not, surely he is meanhearted."

"Before any man cast a stone at an adulteress let him search

his heart and see whether he be guiltless before women. I say to those men who have one rule for their wives and another for the wives of others, to set one standard and abide by it, otherwise be branded as hypocrites. Men too readily lay blame at the doors of others; for surely, if anyone put his hand into a snakehole he can hardly blame the snake for being bitten. If a man enter a house of harlotry who is to blame if he collect the whores' dowry?"

Jesus was invited into a house to eat and rest, and having done so He sat outside in the courtyard amusing the children who played there. He told them stories which were seeds planted in their hearts. Some women were also listening, and when two of the twelve came into the courtyard and told the women to see the children did not bother Jesus He overheard them and said, "Let the children come to Me, for from such as these will come the Rule of God."

Jesus and the twelve entered Caesarea on the day before the Sabbath, and on the Sabbath Jesus was invited to dine at the house of a Perushim, for He had many friends among them. Seated not far from Jesus was a man whose body was swollen by water, and Jesus wished to heal him but being a guest He asked whether any there objected to this being done on the Sabbath. As none did so Jesus laid His hands on the man who then became excited, going out and ejecting from all parts of the body so it became slackened. Jesus said to those present, "I am sure if any of you found an ox or ass fallen into a well on the Sabbath you would have no hesitation in rescuing it." None disputed with Him.

Seeing how those present scrambled for the best seats Jesus said, "When invited to a feast do not rush for the best seats, because the host may have special guests in mind to occupy them. So if you have grabbed one of these seats he will come and request you to vacate it in favour of another, and you will then have to take a seat not wanted by anyone else. When invited as a guest it is wiser to take one of the less desirable places, then your host will come and escort you to a better seat. Thus, the other guests will see that the host holds you in high regard. It is a rule of life that whoever makes himself out to be more important than he is will

be humiliated, while he who is modest will be exalted."

Jesus said, "Most of you here give formal feasts and all have more food and the good things of life than they need, yet because your stomachs have never been empty you cannot understand the sufferings of the underprivileged. But if misfortune descend upon you the cry goes up, 'Woe is me, can there be a God when I am thus afflicted?' Do you not understand that misfortune and tribulation must be sent to such as you, for in what other way will you learn compassion?"

When giving a feast read the intentions of your heart. Are you giving it solely for love of those invited, or do you seek to gain something from it? Are your motives centred on yourself or on others. Also, is it not surely true that if you can afford to give a feast or indulge in good food you can afford to provide for others less fortunate? Who is it that feeds the poor and needy? Is it not the poor themselves, and do not the rich entertain only the rich? I can assure you, it will not be so under the Rule of God. Many say, 'But the poor are poor through no fault of ours', but I tell you that if many of you were as good as some of the poor you would not be wallowing in luxury. How many here can truly say, 'My goodness has brought me riches'?"

After this, Jesus went and addressed a crowd near a water fountain where several expressed intentions of becoming disciples. Jesus said, "It is sad that so many desire to become disciples without weighing the cost of discipleship. To follow Me as a disciple means renouncing all home comforts, and this is not something to be lightly undertaken. Many have responsibilities which cannot be cast on to the shoulders of others. So to those who follow Me as disciples burden is added to burden. Apart from privations and discomforts disciples are subject to the mockery and scorn of men, and unforeseeable suffering may be in store for them. Those who follow Me, taking up My cause but not as disciples, double the burden of their cross."

"If you wished to erect a house it would be very shortsighted to commence the building without working out the cost and being sure this could be met. If the cost and money available are not first

calculated, the foundations may be laid but it will be found impossible to complete the job. Then you will become the laughing stock of the town and people will say, 'The fool started something he could not finish'. What would be your opinion of a king who, with an army of a thousand men, marched against another with ten thousand without carefully weighing his chances? Would he not do better to remain where he was and sue for peace? So I say to those who would become disciples, weigh the matter in your hearts, then if still of the same mind give up all you hold dear and follow Me. But do not come if in so doing you cast aside responsibilities and obligations, for if you do so in relation to others you will be no less inclined to do likewise with Me when the road becomes difficult."

Among the crowd were many self-righteous people and hypocrites, self-deceivers who, interpreting the law to suit their convenience, saw no wrong in themselves; who setting themselves up as judges, were like blind men trying to sort black pebbles from white, and had no more success. They said to Jesus, "You choose the wrong types. If you chose differently we would follow, but sand does not mix with honey." Jesus said, "Let Me tell you a parable. Two men went into the temple to pray, one being a self righteous man and self-deceiver, the other a man aware of his failings and shortcomings. The self-righteous man prayed in this manner, 'I praise my God for many blessings, giving thanks that I am not like the majority of men, avaricious, deceitful, dishonest and adulterous. I fast twice weekly, pay all my subscriptions and attend every temple gathering'. The self-righteous man had a specially reserved seat, so the other was standing apart and he prayed differently, saying, 'My God, do not desert me, I have many failings and need strengthening so I may overcome them and be a better man'."

Jesus said, "I assure you of this: The man who benefited from his prayer was the second one, not the first. This was because, though the first man had many virtues he was unable to recognise his failings. The second man was reconciled with God, while the other was not. He who prays must be as one looking into a mirror,

not with the expectation of seeing a gratifying reflection but seeking an image revealing his faults. If a man put tinted glass before his eyes to enhance his image, thus putting out things he does not wish to see, he is not only a self-deceiver but a fool unto himself. The charioteer does not overhaul his chariot to seek the strong points but to discover the flaws, and if he did not put these right he would risk his life."

When eventide came and Jesus sat with the envoys one of them said, "Sire, we have given up all we have to follow You, and sometimes we get depressed." Jesus said, "The blows life delivers are strengthening ones, and without adversity men would become weak in spirit. The reward I can offer is small compared with your rewards in glory, for here you are small but in Heaven you will be great. There, the highest on Earth shall be the lowest, and the lowliest here shall be the exalted there. This, however does not follow as a natural sequence but only providing the challenge of life is met as it should be and surmounted."

The following day Jesus took Peter, James and John, three of the envoys, to a cave high up on the mountainside where they remained in meditation for three days. On the third day, while seated in the cave the others saw the whole body of Jesus exude a light and become radiant, the colours being blue and white. They were astonished at such an inflow of power, for no other body could have contained it. Though manifesting in them also it was much weaker.

The three with Jesus covered their eyes before the brilliance, and John said, "Sire, while the Holy Spirit manifests in us as no more than a faint blue glow seen only in total darkness, Your brilliance is like that of the sun compared with the palest star." Peter said, "It is good for us to have seen this, for now we know how poorly we compare with You." Jesus said, "I do not teach things without purpose, the things I do are not beyond the reach of anyone, but keep these things to yourselves. I shall truly need all my power and strength to carry out the task ahead. What has to be done will be done, not as I want it but as the Father wants it, for now I know the path I must follow and the ordeal I must undergo."

Coming down from the mountain Jesus saw some disciples and two envoys in the midst of a crowd which parted to let Jesus through. He found the envoys trying to heal a man who was deaf and dumb, but they could not and the crowd was mocking them. Then Jesus said, "The man's ears are not fast, neither is the tongue without speech, but the spirit within cannot use them." Thereupon He strengthened the spirit of the afflicted man with His and the man fell to the ground, foaming at the mouth and tearing at himself. Then the crowd drew back from Jesus in fear, while the man's father abused Him. But soon the man on the ground arose and walked away, and he could both hear and talk.

Later, the disciples asked Jesus why He had succeeded when they had failed, and He said, "These things are done through the power of the Holy Spirit, which is the Hand of God. Men have it according to their capacity to hold it, but before it can come in evil must be driven out. I do not teach abstinence from evil for some purposeless end but to bring to men the recognition of their heritage. All men were once Sons of God, but they became Stepsons of God without heritage. I come to men so they may reinherit and become true Sons of God."

One said, "Sire, while You were away there was another here who healed and did the same things as You, but he was not one of us and we argued with him. He is a disciple of Simon who does many strange things, and the people listen to his words." Jesus said, "Separate the words from the deeds, but good is good whoever does it. Therefore, never speak disparagingly of anyone who does good. If he is not yet against us he may be for us. Therefore, it is unwise to become angry in haste."

Chapter Twenty

JESUS DEPARTED from where He was and moved over to the waters in Juda across the Jordan, and here too crowds gathered about Him to hear His message. Many of the usual questions were asked and similar answers given. One man put this question to Him, "Great Teacher, is it lawful according to the Great Law for a man to put aside his wife, for there are other laws concerning this." Jesus said, "What did one of the great lawgivers, speaking with the authority of God, say about this matter?" The man answered, "The law he gave permitted a severance deed to be made and with this the wife is divorced." Jesus said, "Such laws are needful while men are without wisdom, I assure you it will not be so when the Rule of God comes. They are made for those who cannot overcome differences by compassion and understanding. Where there is no feeling, there cannot be love. Divorce is decreed for the failures in love. Since the beginning there have been male and female, each needing the other for fulfilment and spiritual flowering. For this reason a man leaves his parents and unites with a woman so the two become one in flesh and spirit. The flesh is easily parted, but with the united spirits it is different. Therefore, when two are joined together in the union of love, let no act of man sever them from each other."

"Fornication occurs in marriage as well as outside it, for marriage is much more than the union of flesh, and whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery in spirit

against the one who is his true wife. Should a wife divorce her husband and marry another, she too commits spiritual adultery. Marriage has a much greater significance than this depraved generation realises, for it enters into marriage thoughtlessly and irresponsibly, and then cries, 'Loose us from our obligations, for we have failed and cannot stand the bonds of our covenant'."

After this a disciple came to Jesus and said, "Sire, enlighten me. If there can be fornication in a marriage blessed by tradition and priest, do a man and woman commit greater fornication if unblessed?" Jesus said "Marriage is the blending of two spirits, fornication is the joining of flesh. Nothing done or not done changes this. But if a man and woman be married in the sight of God and not before a priest, let this union not be lightly put apart, for I assure you that no future marriage blessed by priest or otherwise will be a marriage in spirit, it will be no more than fornication."

The following morning Jesus and five disciples had not gone far along the road when a man came running after them, saying, "Sire, what must I do to know the joys of immortality in glory? I know You teach goodness, but though I do my best I find it difficult among so many pleasures." Jesus said, "You have the commandments of Moses, keep these faithfully as interpreted by the fullness of the law; but to these, two more are now added which shall be just as faithfully obeyed: Act towards others as you would have them act towards you, and love your neighbour as yourself."

The man said, "If only I could be as good as You." Jesus answered, "Do not call Me good, for no man made in the mould of man is wholly good. If I were not made in the same mould as man I would not be subjected to his tests and trials, and without overcoming these could not be wholly good either."

When the man had gone one of the disciples who came from beyond the Western Sea said, "I have heard that three things only make men wholly good, but you have many Holy Books which I cannot read. Tell me of the things which are in them." Jesus said, "Store these things in your heart, they are sufficient for the day: Never utter curses against God or the Powers about Him, or speak immodestly to exalt yourself. Do not act fraudulently and never

exaggerate. Always maintain an even temper and do not act hastily. Never use violence unnecessarily or do anything causing unnecessary sorrow. Avoid anything to do with lewdness and obscenity. Commit no slander and speak no gossip. Never make mischief so strife is brought into the lives of others. Tell no lies. Be humble without being servile and be clean in all ways. Whatever you do to earn your bread, do to the best of your ability. Fulfil all your daily obligations and in the time left to you serve a cause which is good. Add these to the teachings you have heard and you will live a good life."

Another disciple said, "A good man soon loses his friends." Jesus replied, "No, goodness, like adversity, winnows them." One of the other disciples said, "It is very difficult to live a life which is wholly good." Jesus answered, "It is even more difficult to enter into the greater life of the spirit." The words surprised those hearing them, but Jesus assured the disciples about Him that it was true, adding, "Nothing worthwhile is ever easily gained."

Jesus continued, "Let all who can do so empty themselves of evil, the deeds are outside but the thoughts are within. By striving hard and chastening the flesh, not yielding to the call of its lusts, the soul is strengthened by an inflow of spiritual food." Then Jesus asked the disciples with Him if all understood that unless they could pass the tests of the flesh they could not know Heaven. All replied that they understood.

A disciple asked, "How long must men be subject to death?" Jesus replied, "So long as women bear children."Another asked, "What is the food of the spirit?" Jesus said, "The truly hungry man eats bitter things and enjoys them, even so does the hungry spirit thrive on the bitterness of the world. The body is not nourished by bitterness and therefore enjoys food supplied by every healthful plant. If the spirit is to be made healthy the body must be subdued, for either the body is master or the spirit is."

One of the women, Salome, who had accompanied the disciples, asked Jesus, "Is it within the law for a man to marry and yet not lie with his wife?" Jesus answered, "It is never right to live falsely or to dishonour a pledge. Always let whatever be done

accord with the intention declared." Salome said, "Sire, when will the Rule of God come?" Jesus replied, "When women place greater value on the treasures they hold, for men will strive harder for gold than for brass. When man and woman cease to pander to the flesh and become truly one in spirit. For of this I assure you, unless man and woman exalt the spirit above the flesh, they will not know life in glory."

Another woman asked, "Who then shall know eternal life?" Jesus said, "All will have eternal life, but not all will know it, while many will be found in a place of sorrow." She said, "No woman can make a man good," and Jesus replied, "Any woman can make a man better."

When they came to a place of rest Philip said, "Sire, teach us to understand our Father in Heaven, and if we know His nature it will suffice." Jesus answered, "I have been with you some time, but still many of you do not understand. I do not speak for Myself but as the mouthpiece of the Father. Can the nature of a father be much different from that of his sons?"

"I teach you about God the Father, for you have to carry my words to others, and spoken thus they will understand. But He is not quite like earthly fathers, for His wisdom is infinitely greater. Think of an earthly father and magnify his greatness and goodness, his wisdom and justice, his sense of discipline and compassion a thousand times, and you glimpse God the Father hazily."

One of the women, not yet a disciple, approached the place where Jesus sat and said, "I have been harshly treated by the law concerning a daughter's inheritance. How do You interpret it?" Jesus said, "I interpret all laws with mercy and compassion, but justice must not be put aside in their favour. It is written that if a man die without fathering a son his inheritance shall become the daughter's, but his wife shall not be deprived of her portion. Yet when there are sons a daughter is not deprived of her portion, therefore the inheritance should be divided equally among sons and daughters."

"All women should have a rightful portion at marriage, but it would be unseemly for any woman to contend with her kinsmen

for it. No woman should ever seek a husband because of what she may gain from such marriage, for this makes her a deceiver denying him the joy of love. No woman should ever snare a man into lust or seek a husband so she can leave her father's house, for this is a wrong against the husband. No woman having committed fornication should ever go to a man as wife, for in giving herself cheaply to one and dearly to another she shames and insults her husband. If she loved him how could she say, 'Give much for that which I freely bestowed on another'. Better for her to say, 'As with him so with you'."

"A man built a house, taking care with the decorating and its furnishings. Then, going to a friend he said, 'Because of my affection for you I will give this house to you as a gift. I know this is not usual but I have so much affection for you that I willingly disregard the common custom of men'. Later, he built another house and taking the furnishings which were no longer new, from the first house put them into the second. Going to another friend he said, I have a house which, because of my affection for you, I will sell at the usual price with a yearly rental for the furnishings'. Now, for which of these friends did he have the greatest affection? Would not the second man justly feel he had been treated badly in relation to the first? Would it not be fairer to have treated both alike?"

"The law is to wear the clothes of purity, and to absorb the words of the Holy Books is to be anointed with wisdom. For the Holy Books of Wisdom are weavers preparing the garments of eternal life in glory. They are available to all and may be either accepted or ignored. The Kingdom of Heaven is like a king giving a wedding feast, who, moving about among his guests, notices a man without a wedding garment. The king says to him, 'My friend, why did you come here attired like this, when it makes you completely out of place?' The man can make no answer, so the king calls his servants and says, 'Turn him out, for he does not fit in here'."

"Let all men be just and merciful towards one another, for all who are will not be overlooked in the life to come. But those who act otherwise shall surely suffer. Those who pander to people in high places, or who distort the laws of God to suit their own ends,

or twist them to serve unintended purposes, shall not be overlooked at the accounting."

"There are those who interpret the law narrowly, so that, while not taking the clothes from a widow's back they will take her house and milch cow and drive the fatherless children from their home. They justify themselves by saying, 'This is the law, and was not her husband a debtor?' Many are the devious roads followed by the hypocrites, for this is a wrongful interpretation of the law."

"The Holy Books of the Jews say that an eye shall be taken for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, but the words of the law must be interpreted with justice. For if an eye be taken from he who put out another's, or a tooth from someone who has knocked out the tooth of another, is the loss made good in this manner? Or if a one eyed man cause him with two eyes to lose one, shall he be made blind and so suffer a greater loss? Or if a man with two eyes cause a man with one eye to be made blind, shall he lose both?"

"Henceforth, let the loss be made good in silver or through labour, for now the law of revenge shall be overruled by the law of retribution. All laws shall now be administered under the rule of recompense. All these things I give you that they may be established and added to the law, so that henceforth they be used in judgements among the just."

"I come to open the blind eyes of ignorance, to rescue the captives confined in dungeons of delusion and to free men from the shackles of the flesh. I come to quicken the dead in spirit, to heal the wounds of worldly woes and to comfort the despairing."

About this time some of the Perushim who inclined towards Jesus came to warn Him that certain men of Herod sought to do Him harm, advising Him to leave. Jesus said, "If anyone intends to report My whereabouts to Herod, let him do so. But I will not leave until the third day, when My work here will be complete."

He then went with His disciples to Allon where He rested among the trees for seven days, teaching them the secrets of hidden things. On the seventh day men of Kadesk came out of Juda, and Jesus said, "Beware of these, for they betrayed their own fathers and pollute whatever is clean." Then Jesus and those with Him departed.

Chapter Twenty-one

THE DISCIPLES AND FOLLOWERS of Jesus began to assemble in Capernaum to make arrangements for the journey to Jerusalem. When Jesus and some of the twelve who were with Him came to the city, it was the twelfth month and the collector of taxes came to Peter and said, "Is your Master liable to pay the dues?" Peter replied, "No, for He pays the tax imposed on strangers, but He will not make issue over the matter."

So three of the disciples went down to the waters and caught several large fish which they sold in the market. Then Peter took the money to the collector of taxes who tested the pieces and found them good. Jesus was standing nearby, and noticing how adulterated money and coins below weight were rejected He said to His disciples, "Be like the honest coin testers, though testing men instead of money. Weigh all things with care, using a fair set of scales. Reject all which is impure or not what it should be, keeping only that which is good."

"As there are counterfeit coins so are there counterfeit deeds, and they are equally hard to detect. Take people as you find them, but reserve judgement until they have been tested. All men are friends in a boat sailing before a fair wind, but when a squall comes and it sinks the true are divided from the false."

A man stopped Jesus in the street and said, "They say You know the will of God, what does He require of me?" Jesus said, "Did not your father Moses say, 'Hear, my people, for this is what

your God requires of you: That you honour Him, following His path and loving Him; serving Him with all your heart and soul and keeping His divine utterances and law'."

About this time Ruben, son of Jaros, who had followed Jesus since the healing of his sister, came to Him and said, "Sire, my heart is troubled, for I wish to marry, and if I do this I cannot remain with You." Jesus said, "Life is a race where every day the hurdles of decision have to be jumped. You must decide one way or the other and with finality, having no regrets later. It is well you spoke, for the sun should never set on an indecision. When marriage and duty oppose each other, then a man must choose duty and a woman marriage, but when marriage can be combined with a diminished obligation to duty this course is not denied to a man. However, marriage is not the least of life's crosses and any who enter it thinking otherwise fall beneath the unexpected burden. If your wife is chosen wisely, you will possess a treasure beyond price; but if foolishly, you are condemned to a burden of sorrow. Go with My blessing, have many children and bring them up in the Light. Thus you will serve best and I leave My cause in good hands."

Jesus said to some disciples later in the day, "In the Holy Books it is written, 'Bearer of good tidings, go into the mountains and lift up your voice with power, crying through all Juda and Jerusalem: Hail your God and your Deliverer'."

Jesus and His followers took a boat and came to the outlet of the waters, where the others stayed seven days while Jesus fasted. After He returned the disciples said, "Sire, we are concerned, for You spend too much time in solitude and fast too long, surely this will harm You." Jesus replied, "When fasting is properly undertaken it can do nothing except good. Also, the body is like a pitcher which, containing water, must be emptied before it will hold wine. So it is with the Holy Spirit. Did not Moses fast for forty days, during which time the Holy Spirit flowed into him so his face shone before the people like a great light? Such is the nature of the power, and because of its brightness he had to veil it. Likewise with Elijah who fasted forty

days. Do you think those two suffered harm, or did they benefit through a strengthening of the spirit?"

"This you must always remember: When the corn is ripe for cutting the harvesters come and it is gathered in; but though it die many ears have ripened on the stalk and from these will spring other plants. You are the ripening grain, go forth and sow the field in which will grow plants bringing the Rule of God into being. For then men will be ruled with justice and goodwill, the rich serving according to their endowments, and no man will be idle or wasteful."

"Now the wickedness of men is like a canopy over a garden, shutting out the fertilising rain so it cannot nourish the plants beneath, therefore they wither away. If the canopy remains the ground becomes bare and barren, yet it needs only the removal of the canopy to make the ground blossom forth into fruitfulness. Such is the nature of the power of the Holy Spirit."

One of the disciples said, "We have seen that the power is a miraculous thing, but the effort is beyond many of us." Jesus said, "That is the hair in the dough, apathy must be overcome and effort expended."

Peter said, "We go to Jerusalem, what if the people call on You to lead them into battle? Surely, You will not ignore their cry." Jesus said, "Oh Peter, so long with Me yet still confusing the ways of God with those of men. Taking up the sword is the easy way, for it is more difficult to peacefully change the hearts of men than to impose a change by violence. Those who have to resort to violence are lesser men than those who convert through example and teaching."

"Is it not written in the Holy Books, 'Those who seek wisdom as others seek riches will certainly come to an understanding of the ways of God, and this knowledge delivers them from the darkness of ignorance'?"

During the heat of the day Jesus was invited into a rich man's house, and the man of many privileges asked Him, "Why do You prefer to speak in the alleyways and among the poor? Surely, it would be better to convert the influential people." Jesus said, "I

speak to those who listen, and they are found among the poor. The rich are so busy acquiring worldly wealth and chasing fleeting pleasure that they have no time for more important things. They are fattening geese waddling through lush pastures, simply eating and sleeping in content, unconcerned for the coming day when they themselves will be consumed."

The rich man said, "Where is the Kingdom of Heaven, and how do I get there?" Jesus said, "The road starts within yourself, but to find it you must abide by the law as written in the Books of Wisdom. For knowledge of the law provides a true and clear picture of yourself. Just as a mirror reflects back a true image so does the law when studied diligently. Let this be your guiding light: Take no thought for tomorrow, whether it bring good or bring evil; the cares of the day are sufficient and the law will sustain you."

The man said, "Would it not be more profitable if You showed how to extend our days?" Jesus said, "What benefit would a longer life bestow? For the tyrants it would mean more time to oppress the weak. For the evildoers it would mean more time to indulge their wickednesses, while the hypocrites would spawn more sorrow. The moneyseekers would have more time for exploitation and the indolent more time to rest. A longer life could only add to the misery of the world. Life as it is suffices for those who wish to use it profitably. If men cannot find the road to righteousness during the time they have, then they never will."

After this Jesus and the disciples set out for Jerusalem, passing through the borders of Juda and over the Jordan by way of Peria. Jesus led the way with six of the twelve, but as they proceeded many of those who followed became afraid and held back. Noticing what was happening Jesus called all the twelve to Him and said, "We will soon be arriving in Jerusalem, and there I must undergo the ordeal I am taking upon Myself for the sake of mankind. I am the sacrifice to their apathy, but I depend upon you to play your parts, spreading the message of hope and the coming Rule of God among all men. For now I come as promised, surely the people will no longer doubt."

Then the brothers James and John requested a favour of Jesus, saying, "Permit us to sit one on either side of You when You reach the state of glory." Jesus said, "You do not understand what you ask or the consequences. You cannot drink from My cup of sorrow or undergo My ordeal. I must carry My cross alone, for there is none with whom I can share the burden of My heart." When they insisted that they would be ready for anything Jesus said to them, "If you remain steadfast in the cause you will drink from the same cup and undergo much suffering. But whether you share My future state is something over which I have no control. Not all are drawn into the same companionship."

As Jesus approached the city gate at Jerico a large crowd gathered, among which was a humble and honest person named Mikah, who worked hard to support a large family. He was anxious to see Jesus, but being rather short and unable to see over the heads of the people he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree along the route. When Jesus came to the tree He stopped underneath and called to Mikah, "Come down, for today I will be your guest." The man climbed hastily down and welcomed Jesus with pleasure, but those standing by expressed disapproval, saying, "We expected this to be a great and good man, yet He associates with men like this who are poor and not notorious for good deeds." Jesus said, "The conscientious physician goes among those requiring his care and attention, not among those who have no need of him. If you ordered your lives according to this principle they would be more beneficial to you in the long run."

After resting in the city during the heat of the day Jesus left Jerico with His disciples, followed by many people. Outside the gate of departure a blind beggar sat in the dust by the roadside, and hearing the name Jesus on the tongues of the people he cried out as Jesus went by, "Son of David, have pity on me." Many of the people, hearing this, tried to silence him, but the beggar would not stop and continued shouting and oft repeating the words, 'Son of David'.

Though He had passed, Jesus stopped and sent a disciple back to bring the beggar to Him. When they came, the disciple leading

the beggar, Jesus said to the one who had been shouting out, "What do you expect Me to do for you?" The beggar replied, "Great Healer, if You would only help me to see again I would be happy." Jesus said, "Unfruitful happiness cannot be made an end in life, but your affliction has served its purpose." Then Jesus placed His hands over the man's eyes and told him to sit no more by the roadside but to walk with the people.

About two miles from Jerusalem they came to a place called Bethena, close to the Mount of Olives, where there were many fig trees. Calling two of His disciples to Him Jesus said, "Go into the village just ahead and there, at the first house, you will see a man standing by his doorway with a pitcher beside him. Go and ask him for a drink of water, and say, 'The Master comes'. He will then give you a colt which is tethered nearby, and two men will ask you who it is for and you must answer, 'It is for Jesus'."

When the colt was brought to Jesus some cloaks were laid over its back, and Jesus mounted. Then, some men having gone before, the people strewed the road with flowers and brushwood, and many shouted, "The Chosen One comes, hail to He who represents God. Hail to the day that witnesses the One who will rule in the name of our father David."

Many others cried, "Behold the Deliverer", while other people shouted, "Come and see the vindicated king." Among the crowd were some who said, "This is not a fighting man mounted on a warhorse, but a humble man on a female colt." Many mocked, while some said, "It is only a sorcerer on a mare." That was the manner in which Jesus came to Jerusalem, but night being close He sought shelter at a house just outside the city.

The following day Jesus went to the Great Temple of the Jews, and going around it came to the part where a fire was always maintained for the burnt offerings, and payment was made for its use. Here was the place where the father of John had been slain. Outside this was a hall where money was changed for those going in, the Perushim not permitting this to be done within the courtyard. Seeing some men carrying vessels Jesus said to them, "Surely you know it is written that the temple shall not be made

a thoroughfare?" They turned on Him, saying, "Where have You been and who are You to rebuke us?" Whereupon there was an outbreak of fighting between those with Jesus and others. Jesus also overturned the tables of the moneychangers, saying, "You are just as bad, for you turn the house of God into a marketplace."

When the temple guards came to restore order they said to Jesus, "We should kill You for this." Jesus replied, "Destroy this temple and in three days it will rise again." They, not understanding, answered, "The temple has stood for long and took forty-six years to build, if You say it could be built in three days You are a fool." They did not know Jesus referred to a temple not made by hands.

Going outside to the place of healing where many lay under the trees, Jesus went among them, and because of the great power which was in Him He excelled all other healers. Seeing this, some young men shouted "Praise the Lord God who has sent us a Son of David." Hearing this, a number of priests came to Jesus and said, "Are You going to cause some disturbance? Put a stop to these things they are saying." Jesus answered "Words of wisdom will issue from the mouths of babes, this is written in the Holy Books, read them and you will learn much more." He then returned to Bethena.

The priests and lawscribes held a long discussion about Jesus, for they knew the mood of the people and foresaw trouble. There was much dispute as to who He was and what He claimed to be, some saying one thing and some another.

Chapter Twenty-two

THE NEXT DAY JESUS RETURNED to Jerusalem with three of the envoys, and while within the precincts of the Great Temple some scribes and counsellors of the temple came up to Him and said, "By whose authority and by what right do You behave as You do?" Jesus said, "Before answering your question let Me ask you one. When John baptised in water, was this divinely inspired or did it originate in the minds of men?" This was not a question they could answer, for if they replied, "It was divinely inspired" Jesus could justly say, "Why then did you not listen to him?" If they replied, "It originated with men", it would arouse the hostility of the people who believed John to be divinely inspired. When they declined to answer Jesus said, "Neither need I answer you."

A priest said to Jesus, "Tell us who You really are?" and He answered, "I am a Son of God and the Servant of Man who, of Himself, can do nothing, but being filled with the power of Him who overshadows me, One to whom all things are possible." The priest said, "The Son of God is not unknown to us and the Servant of Man will not come as You have done, though we cannot understand this name. Some of the people say You are the Chosen One who will deliver us and reign over us, but He will come with manifest power." Jesus said, "This is a night of ignorance and I come declaring the Way of Light. Whoever believes in Me does not serve Me but serves with Me. He is My brother in the cause

of God. He who sees Me sees the reflection of He who inspires Me. I am the Light of the World. If anyone hears My words but chooses to ignore them, I am not his judge, for I am not come to judge men but to guide them. The Light will not be with you for long, so hasten to it, lest you be left in darkness." The priests said among themselves, "Perhaps He is harmless."

Going into the courtyard where many people were gathered, Jesus stood in a corner and spoke to any who would listen, and it was here He told this parable. "A man planted a vineyard, equipping it with all things necessary for winemaking, then he leased it and left to live elsewhere. After the vintage season, the owner sent a servant to the tenants to collect the rent, but they laid hands on him and after beating him up sent him on his way empty-handed. The owner sent another who was treated even worse, while the third man sent was killed. When no one else would go the owner decided to send his eldest son, reasoning that the tenants would respect his authority. However, when the eldest son came the tenants decided that if he were dead no one else would dare to come, so they killed him and threw the body into a pit. Now, do you think the tenants' reasoning was sound? Of course the owner came with those who meted out justice, and having put the tenants to death gave the lease of the vineyard to others."

Jesus also told other parables, and when the self-righteous ones and false Perushim realised that most were directed against them, they considered ways to silence Him. But as He was popular with the people they decided it would be better to leave Him alone. Jesus taught that the greatest enemies of man and the greatest opposition to the coming Rule of God were not the obvious evildoers and criminals but the hypocrites, self-deceivers and self-centred. Those are the true enemies of men, the festering evil in their midst, yet they cannot see themselves for what they are and have many ways of justifying themselves.

For Jesus said of those, "They sit before well filled tables, condemning the crimes of those who are hungry. They sleep on soft beds and wallow in worldly luxuries, but their hearts are closed and their faces hardened towards those who steal and even

murder. Yet I tell you their own thoughts conceive and engender much greater wrongs. Neither are those who associate with them free from guilt."

Going to an open space beyond the Great Temple, Jesus addressed those who believed in His cause, saying, "Abiding by the things I have taught you will bring knowledge of Truth, and Truth will set you free." Some replied, "We are of the stock of Abraham and have never been enslaved to any man. How can You state we will be made free?" Jesus said, "Anyone following an evil course is a slave. There are men who are enslaved to their desires and others enslaved to unnatural cravings. There are those enslaved to their weaknesses and others to their fears and doubts. That is why I say I come to set you free. I know you are from the stock of Abraham, but you do him no credit in seeking to kill those whose teachings disturb you. Why must you listen only to those who tell you pleasing things, when there is greater benefit to be gained from those who tell things which disturb or displease? I have no time to go around praising the good, there is too much badness to be exposed."

The people said, "We know our fathers and are of their blood, and we know our Father who reigns in Heaven." Jesus said, "If God were your Father you would all love Me as a brother. Can you understand the things I say, or are they beyond your grasp?"

Not all the Perushim were opposed to Jesus, only a few allying themselves with the Herodians because of Him. One of the latter came to Jesus trying to trap Him by asking, "Sire, Your sincerity is established and Your impartiality known. Help us, for this is the time of taxing. Shall the temple tax be paid to God or to Caesar?" Jesus said, "Show Me the coins you use to pay the tax," and one was given to Him. Jesus held it up and asked, "Whose likeness and inscription appear on this coin?" They said, "It is Caesar's." Jesus said, "Do not give to God the things which are rightly Caesar's, or to Caesar the things which are rightly God's."

The next question was asked by one who believed in bodily renewal after death, and he said, "Master of the law, Moses

handed down laws to govern our lives, and one states that when a man dies his brother should marry his wife providing she is without child. Now, if there are seven brothers the first marries and dies and so his brother marries the widow, she being childless. The same happens down through all seven, so when the last dies she is still left childless until she too dies. Now, when all rise to life at the resurrection which one can rightfully claim the woman as wife, when she has been legally married to all seven?" Jesus said, "By believing in bodily renewal you start with a false premise and have no understanding of the nature of the spirit. Where death is overcome, marriage does not conform to earthly laws which are made to mitigate the weaknesses of men. Tell Me, with which one did the woman's spirit blend and with which was there only a union of flesh?"

Jesus said, "Concerning the awakening of the dead, do not the Holy Books declare there is only a God of the living? This is true and those who believe otherwise are in error. When all life is supported by the arm of God, how can He be the God of the dead?"

Many people believed in Jesus and had faith in His teachings, for they said among themselves, "Would the Chosen One show us any greater proofs than this man?" Because of the things said and done by many concerning Jesus, those who held power, fearing a disturbance, sent guards to seize Him. But He said to the captain, "I am here for a few days and then I must go, following the path of My obligation. Seek Me then, for I will be in a place beyond your reach. I follow a chosen path and none may follow. We each have a duty, but you have discretion whether to take Me or not. My frailties say, 'Go with him', but My heart calls Me to duty." The captain of the guard said, "Whom do You serve so dutifully?" Jesus replied, "I serve God."

Then the captain said, "The priests serve God and You are not a priest, and it is said You call Yourself the Servant of Man, but who is He?" Jesus answered, "The service rendered by priests is meaningless unless it also serves man. For service in the cause of God is likewise service in the cause of man. Can your swordarm serve one master and your shieldarm another?" The captain said,

"Sire, I can see You are a man dedicated to duty. Whether Your cause be just or unjust, whether You be friend or foe, it is not within my understanding to know, but a man whose heart is ruled by the demands of duty I can understand. I will tell those who sent me that shortly You leave for a distant place where none can follow, and they will leave You alone." When those who sent to have Jesus taken heard this they said, "Perhaps He goes to the Greeks or the islands in the sea, therefore we will ignore Him."

Jesus went and rested among the columns of Solomon, and while there some people came and asked why He did not declare Himself and reveal He was the Chosen One and God's Anointed, the promised One from the stock of David. Jesus said, "My works and words declare Me and establish My title. Those who heed My message enter the proper fold, and a good shepherd protects his flock seeing none goes astray or is taken by wolves. Though these are My first care I seek to bring all men into the fold best suited for them, and I am prepared to die if thereby I can bring men into the fold leading to the fields of everlasting life."

"The deeds whereby men save their lives on Earth may cost them a life in glory, but whoever lays down his life in the cause of God shall surely know eternal life. I come to sow strife among men, so they may be roused from the sleep of apathy. I come to strengthen the poor, so they may take heart and throw off the yoke imposed by the privileged."

"This is My message for the wealthy: Enjoy your illgotten goods, console yourselves with comfort and buy the fickle goodwill of men. Make merry while you may, close your eyes to the harshness of reality, for the day will surely come when your body weakens, the pleasures pall and you glimpse the dark doorway ahead. Be certain that the only welcome you will get on the other side is from spirits of darkness who will escort you to a proper place in their dismal abode."

Because of His condemnation of the rich who misused their wealth, and nearly all of them did, the priests were angry with Jesus, for they depended on rich patrons. They said, "Who are You to revile Your betters when You are no more than a loud-

tongued beggar?" Jesus said, "Is it not written in the Holy Books, 'Disregard outward appearances, for these may conceal either treasure or garbage, only God knows what really lies within. The body is only the outer covering shed at death. What matters is the likeness of the spirit it clothes'."

One of the priests said, "You claim to save through baptism, a cleansing by fire and water, but while these are both great purifiers how can they deliver man from sin?" Jesus said, "Water and fire are purifiers of earthly things, but I tell you that unless men be cleansed in the waters of contrition and tested in the fires of adversity, they cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven." The priests said, "Where, then, is the Kingdom of Heaven?" Jesus answered, "Beyond Earth lie the dominions of spirit, and therein are the Kingdom of Heaven and the Principality of Evil, places of light and glory and of darkness and despair."

Another priest said, "Tell us about the spirit." Jesus said, "A vintner asking for wine! Does mine so much excel yours?" Then He continued, 'Men understand the things wherein they place their hearts; if it be in worldliness they know worldly things, but if it be in spirituality they know things of the spirit. He who is ever watchful of the wind never sows and he who fixes his eyes on the clouds never reaps. The wind blows where it will, and though recognising its sound no men knows from whence it comes or whither it goes."

"For the best advice on worldly matters I would go to a worldly-wise man, but I am a spiritually-wise man, therefore cannot you take notice when I talk of things I know? That I gain nothing from My teachings is obvious, for My clothes and manner of life bear witness to this."

Nearby a rich man stood listening, and now he said, "Have You never bought a tree for silver, and having worked it sold the product of Your hands for gold? If a man has seed should he let it rot? Is it not better to plant the seed so it yields an increase, and is not the sower entitled to this?" Jesus said, "The labourer is worthy of his hire, and he who sows is entitled to reap the increase. But remember, the sown seed does not grow through

human effort alone, it requires rain and sun, and the soil must give up its goodness. These things come from God as gifts to man. Why, then, should man deny God's participation? God says, 'As My share is above My needs give it to My little ones', and should not the sower do the same? Therefore I say, he who fails to support the underprivileged, in obedience to God's wishes, defrauds God of His rightful due for what He has done; for, cannot even an earthly partner decree what shall be done with the profit from this participation? I assure you, no man has ever yet made a profit wholly through his own efforts, and fraud perpetrated on the Divine Partner will not be overlooked."

The rich man said, "Your words sound well, but the Holy Books say the ass is loaded according to its strength. The more I give in charity the more I am harried by beggars, even if I gave all I have it would fail to satisfy." Jesus said, "If your wealth is so burdensome, then sell all you have and give the proceeds to good causes. It is not wholly good to give charity, for this is like cutting the thornweed which quickly springs up again from the root. It is more worthy to dig up the root of poverty."

Then the rich man said, "Having my responsibilities and a large household I am caught between the millstones, for is it not said in the Books of Wisdom, 'No man should disregard his responsibilities'?" Jesus said, "The law brings all things to a balance of moderation. Does it not say, 'It is sufficient to feed and clothe the womenfolk modestly, caring for their needs but ensuring they are not spoilt by idleness'? It suffices to provide your sons with learning and skill and your daughters with their dowries. There is nothing more you can give them, for above this you harm them with luxury. A poor man cannot spoil his family with overindulgence, but precautions against this are not the least of the rich man's burden."

When it was close to eventide Jesus was in another place, and He said to a few people who were gathered about Him, "I am the fountain of life, if any thirst let him come to Me and his thirst will be quenched. For is it not written, 'Streams of living waters will pour out from springs within Him and overwhelm the seats of the

deceitful? The same waters will strengthen the spirit and wash away falsity." Jesus was referring to the power of the spirit which filled Him as no other man bad been filled. Some of the people said, "Surely this is the Chosen One," while others said, "Yes, He is God's Anointed." There were many disputes concerning Him.

Jesus said, "You are betrayed by those who preach one thing and practise another. They delight in being seen in prominent places and think the misguided adulations poured on them signify greatness. Foolish people follow their ways and copy their pretensions. These people are not least among the hidden woemakers."

"You are deceived by hypocrites and the self-righteous, and led into error by the self-justified. Those who should watch over you set snares for your feet and many are those who say, 'Heed my words but not my deeds'. Those who set themselves up over the people or who attain positions of authority, freely eat the fruits of success but avoid the responsibility of setting an example of goodness. I tell you, cast these people out. Instead of standing aside, wringing your hands and crying 'Woe, for the world is all wrong', bestir yourselves. For I tell you, God will not do things you are too apathetic to do for yourselves. They who desire to be with Me in My Kingdom must stand firm, holding fast to My cause through tribulation and trial."

Just then some Perushim came by and Jesus knew them to be false to their declared beliefs, so He called out, "Hear Me, you hypocrites and deceivers. Are you not among those declaring that any man swearing by the temple is not bound by his oath, but any swearing by the temple gold is bound? Fools, which is the greater, the gold or the temple containing it? Or you say that those swearing by the altar are not bound by their oath, but those who swear by whatever is upon it are bound. Which is the greater, the offering or the altar consecrating it?"

"You concern yourselves with selling incense and the small profits from herbs and perfumed candles, while overlooking more important matters. These petty things can be delegated to others. Or do you find weightier aspects of the law, such as mercy, justice

and truthfinding, beyond your abilities? If so, then you deceive the people. Your minds are fixed on little things and cannot grasp greater ones. You strain a fly from the winebowl but leave the wasp."

The next day Jesus spoke outside the Gate of the Gentiles, and while there a lawscribe asked Him, "Which is the supreme commandment?" Jesus answered, "None is supreme for all men, but for you the supreme one is, 'Listen, O people, the God whom you worship is the sole God. Love Him with all your heart, all your mind and all your strength'. The next one is, 'Love your neighbour as yourself'." The lawscribe said, "You speak well and speak truthfully in saying there is only one God having no equal. I believe that if a man loves Him wholeheartedly, and his neighbour as himself, it serves Him better than all the burnt offerings which go up in smoke." Jesus said, "If these are not empty words you will know the glory in the Kingdom of the Spirit."

One of those there said, "I pray thrice daily, fasting on the second and fifth days. Does this prove my love of God?" Jesus said, "Words alone or deeds done which benefit no other, or purposeless restrictions, do no indicate true love of God. They are sops to weakness. These, being easy, deny such love its true expression. Show your love of God by working in His cause and making the world a better place. Do something requiring action where you may risk unpopularity or scorn."

Two dignitaries of the temple stopped to listen, and Jesus pointing to them said, "Beware of those who ostentatiously display themselves seeking the acclaim or homage of others. From whence does their wealth come? They prey on widows and enrich themselves at the expense of others. Misfortune, providing it passes their door, is their friend. Yet these hypocrites put on a great show of righteousness, but one day they will be seen for what they really are inside."

Entering the temple Jesus stood near one of the offering chests, watching as people dropped money into the chest of their choice. Many rich people contributed large amounts, but most did this so all could see. Then a poor widow came and she gave only

two small brass coins. Seeing this, Jesus said to one of the disciples beside Him, "Did you see what the poor widow gave? Surely there is a lesson here. I can assure you that the offering of this woman is more acceptable than any of the others, for she gave all she had, while others gave only a fraction of their wealth. Tonight they will eat well, but she will go hungry. Giving is meaningless unless it entails some real sacrifice. What the rich gave were only sops to their consciences. When arriving in a town, hungry, weary and travelstained, do we seek food and shelter from the rich or from the poor? Is it not the rich, who have so much to give, who turn us from their doors, while the poor, who have little, provide hospitality?"

Later, one of the envoys said to Jesus, "When will all the evil be purged from the Earth?" Jesus said, "When it is no longer spawned in the hearts of men. There is nothing wrong with the Earth that men cannot put right. Do not expect help from God, but be men enough to fight your own battles. No easy time lies ahead of you, for wherever you go your loyalty to My cause will bring the hatred of men upon you. Nevertheless, remain steadfast through all the trials and tribulations lying ahead, and you will be glorified in immortality."

The envoys said, "Sire, can such things indeed happen to us?" Jesus said, "Be sure they will." They said, "Surely our tree of suffering will not bear bitter fruit or even prove fruitless." Jesus answered, "No, the sapling will grow strongly. From the tree will arise another teaching and out of this a confusion of beliefs, each striving for its own advantage. There will be unprofitable doctrines and viciousness, cruelties and intolerance, with many persecutions, all done in My name. They will corrupt and falsify My teachings to serve their own ends. Hypocrisy will rule the hearts of men and few will follow even the beliefs of their own hearts. These things must be, for they reside in the natures of men, but under the Rule of God they will be changed."

Jesus said to those with Him, "I will be slain as were John and his father, for I am feared because I may claim a right to rule from the kings who were before David. The burden of My death lies

heavily, but it is undertaken with purpose so men can be saved from evil, and what I do will speed the day of their deliverance."

"I do not ride the windspirit but have mapped the road ahead. No man can ever enter Heaven unless wearing the clothes of Heaven. The world knows the ways of the world and welcomes worldly things, but the spirit knows the ways of the spirit and welcomes spiritual things. Serve one or the other, no man can serve both."

Chapter Twenty-three

WHILE JESUS SPENT THE DAYS in Jerusalem the nights were spent on the slopes of Mount Olive, and the disciples built shelters close to a place where there was an oil press. However, one day, at eventide, Jesus went to the house of Simon the Pure where some women who were followers of his were living.

Though the disciples were given food, little was said to them; for they, being strangers, the people in the house were suspicious, and Simon lay on a cushion across from Jesus. After they had eaten and were talking together, a woman came from a house nearby. She was veiled and carried an alabaster jar.

Now, this was Mary of Magdala whose father had been a merchant, but he disowned her, for she had lived with a centurion serving in the army of Rome. When he returned to his lawful wife, Mary had kept herself by singing in the taverns of Galilee.

The woman unsealed the jar and poured a sweet-scented oil over the head of Jesus, seeing which some of those present were indignant, saying, "What a waste, when this could have been sold for a lot of money which would have benefited the poor." Jesus said, "Leave her alone, there is little point in being angry with her when all she has done is to honour Me. You can help the poor whenever you like, but I will not be here much longer.

Turning to Mary of Magdala, He said, "Why do you pay Me this honour, for the cost to you must have been great?" Someone said, "The price was easily obtained." Mary said to Jesus, "Sire, I am she whom you saw in Paneas, for when women reviled me I

came to you and said, 'Forgive my sins'. When you asked wherein I had sinned I said, 'By loving while unwed'. Thereupon You said, 'That of itself is no wrongdoing and demonstrates a greater love than that of many who say, 'The price of my love is marriage'. You said I gave the greatest form of love any woman can give, for being virgin I went to my love without the security of marriage, seeking in no way to bind the man."

Jesus said, "With this man you did no wrong, and though your love was unblessed in the eyes of men, providing you loved truly it was pure and sanctified in the sight of God. The man, however, is not without sin in this matter and will surely be called to a proper accounting, and though since leaving him you have done wrong he bears his portion of the guilt. You chose freely not to be a woman reserved for marriage, a choice you could rightly make. Only, should you now seek marriage, saying, 'Though I love you, too, now I have my price', would you be doing wrong. This being committed against God, love and your husband." Mary said, "Sire, I have been a sinner but have not sinned this last year, nor shall I again. Should I love once more I will not now claim the rights of marriage which I once repudiated."

Jesus said, "Love is a blending of spirits and not a union of flesh. Woe to those whose love compounds discord in the place where love is fulfilled. If these things confound you, read the Books of Wisdom."

During this time those in positions of power were taking counsel as to how they might take Jesus by guile and deliver Him to the Romans, for they feared a rising of the people during the Great Festival of the Jews.

Now, Judas Iscaroth, son of Simon, who had followed Joseph the Just before coming to Jesus and becoming one of the twelve envoys, sought for the Chosen One who would deliver the Jews. This he now believed to be another, not Jesus, and he therefore sought to have Jesus held during the festival. Judas, unlike the other envoys, was a Judean, therefore he was unrestricted.

Judas went to the Council and said, "My Master performs signs and fulfils prophesies which speak to the hearts of the

people, therefore might they not proclaim Him in the coming days?" The Council said, "The people are ripe for revolt, and troublemakers are many. We will take this One also. Reveal Him to us and we will hold Him, and for the service you will be paid in silver." One who sat in the Council sent a warning to Jesus, saying, "Leave Bethena and go to Ephraim," but Jesus returned a reply which said, "Things are as they should be and the prophesies will be fulfilled."

On the first day of the Festival, when lambs were being sacrificed, the disciples came to Jesus and asked where the Passover meal should be eaten. Jesus chose two of these and sent them away with this instruction, "Go down and cross the stream flowing eastward from the city, at a place where there is a covered well. There you will see a man seated with a water pitcher beside him. Say to this man, 'We thirst but need more than water'. He will then arise, saying nothing, and you must follow him at a distance, and when you see him enter a house go in also, giving this message to the owner, 'We come from the Master'. He will then show you to a room where you must make preparations."

Now, the house belonged to Obed who was nigh four score years of age, whose brother was Barnabas the Elder. In an upper room the disciples prepared the Passover meal, and when it was evening Jesus came with the twelve envoys and three others, but only thirteen ate with Him.

After He had taken His place at the table and all were seated, Jesus said, "I have very much wanted to keep this Passover with you because it is the last before My ordeal, and I tell you I will not share another with you until My purpose is fulfilled." Then He took the cup before Him and drank, saying, "Blood is the life of men, while this is the life of the grape sacrificed for men, so it is a fitting and worthy symbol of He who offers His life for men. I will not taste wine again until the Rule of God is established." He then passed the cup to John, and taking the bread He gave thanks and broke it, saying, "This represents My body which will be broken as an example to the sons and daughters of men, for all must freely sacrifice for others. As you eat of the bread which is

sacrifice, so shall you eat the bread of eternal life. For without sacrifice there is no life. Henceforth, call it remembrance bread and remembrance wine, when meeting afterwards do this and remember Me. But remember also the sacrifices which must be made for the cause of God."

Jesus said, "The sacrifice is ready, the hand of the betrayer rests upon this table and dips in the bowl, but this is as it should be. Take the cup and drink again, let it seal a new covenant signed with the blood of One who is dedicated to the cause of men and their salvation from darkness into life eternal."

Those about the table began to speculate among themselves as to who would do such a thing, but Jesus bid them be silent, saying, "There is no evil lacking some seeds of goodness which, if extracted, can be nurtured into great trees. A man, finding his storebag of seed grain is mouldy, does not throw it out but searches to find the good grains, and from these he grows a crop which ripens to goodness."

They then began disputing among themselves as to who was first in precedence among them, and Jesus said, "Those with worldly authority derive satisfaction from declaring themselves benefactors of the people, but the benefit they seek is that accruing to themselves. Let this not be so among you, the ones seeking least for themselves and giving most being those taking precedence."

After a while Jesus said, "My friends, I shall be with you only a short time now." Peter said, "Sire, where do You go? Are You deserting us? Can we not come with You?" Jesus said, "You cannot follow Me immediately on this path, and to accompany Me would serve no purpose, but later on you can follow Me. Do not become fainthearted, for if you believe in what I have taught you believe also that I will be guided and strengthened."

"I shall prepare a place for you in the Kingdom of God, and wait there to welcome you. Where I will be you shall be also, and where you are there, too, I will be. You know the way to where I am going and can follow, for the law and the Books of Wisdom are the Way, the Truth and the Light. I have brought you a light to show the way, follow it and you will not go astray."

"Later you will understand that I am united with the Father, and as I am united with Him so you are united with Me. Though we are many, let us stand as one, and those who serve I will serve. To he who believes in My teachings I will manifest. For what I do is done to prove to men My own convictions, that they will come to accept My teachings and follow the road of salvation. The people yearn for the fulfilment of the prophesies and will surely follow One who fulfils them."

Thomas said, "Are You going to manifest only to us?" Jesus answered, "If anyone care for Me and My cause, I will speak to him through the power of the Holy Spirit and it will come to him also. Those who do not care for Me or My cause will ignore My teachings, but do not fear them. Be on guard against those who pay lip service only. While I am with you I can speak as men speak, but when I am gone the Holy Spirit will bear messages in My name, clarifying your minds so you recall all I have taught you."

"In the Kingdom of the Spirit there are many splendid places, and I assure those who remain steadfast that they will be in the best of these. For when men die, each is drawn to the place whereof he is worthy, even to each one is prepared a place for his soul."

"I will go down in the flesh, to arise again in the spirit, with power to manifest to men. I will demonstrate what man can do, and as I do, so can all men. I am a sacrifice to the misguided beliefs of men, that in the fulfilment of those beliefs they might turn to the path of their salvation."

"I am the vine and He who is above Me is The Cultivator, you are the branches, and the sap in Me flows out to you. The sap is My teachings, severed from which you will be like a branch cut from the vine, only suitable for burning. I am the vine and you are its fruit, and if the vine is sound surely its fruit will be sound also."

"This is My last instruction to you: Love one another as I have loved you, for there is but one greater love than that of a man who would sacrifice his life for his friends, and that is the sacrifice of a life for a cause where he serves those unknown to him."

"I have said, love one another, for you will be strengthened in the knowledge of that love. If the world hates you, it has hated Me

first. If you were to remain part of the world, it would accept you as its own and love you. But because I have severed you from the world, setting you apart, it will hate you. For it is in the nature of worldly men to hate those who are different, and not only are you different you also seek to point out their wickednesses. If I chose an easier path your burden would be so much greater, and the fruit of the vine might fall on barren ground. As they have persecuted Me, so they would have persecuted you. As they have spurned My teachings, so would they have spurned yours, and as they rejected Me, so they would have rejected you."

"I have much more to say, but you cannot receive it now. Later, the Spirit of Enlightenment will come when you are ready and guide you truthfully. It will speak to you with a voice of its own, but will convey to you what comes from above. Soon now you will see Me no more in the flesh, but you will behold Me in a new and glorious form."

Those with Jesus did not understand the meaning of what He said and discussed it among themselves, saying, "What does He mean by 'soon'?" Others said, "What can He mean when He says, 'Soon you will no longer see Me, but then you will behold Me'?" The others said, "We just cannot tell."

Jesus, knowing what they were saying and what was in their thoughts, said, "You are wondering about the things I have said. I can assure you that while you sorrow the world will rejoice, for its hopes are fulfilled. A woman becomes afraid just before she gives birth, but once the ordeal is over she no longer recalls the labour pains but rejoices in her child. So, too, you will grieve for a while, but I will manifest to you and then you will rejoice in your hearts."

"The Father's will is that the things I teach should be given to the people, but they will not listen, arguing among themselves as to who I am. Therefore, I must drain the bitter cup of life to its last dregs; then they will say, 'This is He', and heed My words. This I do for men and none can say I have not faced up to the tests of life, or I have shirked its supreme trial."

The disciples then drank the reeling cup, and Jesus said to

Peter, "I depend upon you to carry the burden among the bretheren." Peter said, "Sire, I am ready to go anywhere, to follow You to prison or even to death." Jesus said, "Before the cock's crow in the morning even you, the loyalest of men, will desert Me. Must I undergo the ordeal friendless?" Then all the others assured him of their loyalty.

Jesus said, "When I sent you out with few possessions, did you ever go short of anything?" They said, "No." Jesus then said, "Things are different now. Those who have a purse of money had better take it with them and keep a pack prepared for flight. Whoever is without a sword, let him sell his cloak and buy one. For I can assure you I will fulfil all that the Holy Books say, and is it not written, 'He was classified as an outlaw'? Yes, truly all that is written will be fulfilled in Me and men will find salvation through this fulfilment."

One of the disciples said, "Look, Sire, we have two swords among us." Jesus said, "That is sufficient." Peter said, "Sire, are You going to lead us against the kingdom of evil in arms?" Jesus said, "The battle is for the immortal souls of men. Feast your eyes on Me, for the hour draws near when I shall no longer be with you in body." Then He said to Judas, "Go, spend whatever money is needful, but make haste." No man there understood the meaning of this saying.

When Judas had gone Jesus said, "Upon Me has fallen the obligation for fulfilling the hopes of men. Now I give you a last command: Stand by one another, for if you remain loyal to My cause and to each other, all will know you are true men of God. Do not worry overmuch, have faith in the goodness of God and in Me. In the Kingdom of Heaven there are many places, and had it been otherwise I would have told you. I go first and will prepare a compatible place for all who are with us."

"Do not fear because of the destruction of the body. Remember all I have told you, but be staunch and steadfast, for as they have persecuted Me so will they persecute you. Remember, I have overcome the fears of the flesh, this is My conquest. I will now reveal the secret of My glory: It is dedication to service, and

that glory is the heritage of all men."

When they had finished Jesus went out with His followers, and passing over the stream of Kedron went to a place called Gethsemane because of an oil press there. He took eleven, as Markus the Judean, who was a priest, did not go, Peter being jealous of him. This Markus had been a follower of John of the Wilderness and was a friend of Judas.

When Jesus departed with the eleven Markus did not return to his mother's house in Ophal, but stayed with Lazarus and the others. After Jesus had gone men came to take Him, and Markus, snatching a cloak dashed out to warn Jesus.

Though knowing what should be done for the Chosen One, Judas went to the captain of the Temple Guard and said, "I am one of those who follow Jesus the Galilean, but I fear what He intends to bring about, therefore let Him be held as the Council has decreed."

When Jesus reached the chosen spot in Gethsemane He turned and said to those with Him, "Pray that you may be spared the test." He then took Peter, James and John and withdrew with them about a stone's throw away. Jesus was depressed and filled with foreboding, and He said to the three, "I am going apart to pray for strength to do what must be done, you stay here and keep watch. Perhaps the cup of bitterness will pass Me by, for with the Father all things are possible, but I fear there is no other way for me but to abide by My destiny."

Jesus went just a short distance and lifted His face to the stars and red-glowing moon above. James heard Him pray, "Father, everything is in Your hand, let it not be as I would have it but according to Your will. I leave it in Your hand, but let not the ordeal be too much for Me. The hour is at hand. Strengthen the Son whom You have glorified with the power of Your Spirit, that He may bring to fruition the task You have set Him, leading men to the path of eternal life. Is there no other way?"

He then came back to the three and the sweat stood out redly on His brow, and finding two asleep, for they were heavy with wine, He said to Peter, "Simon, could you not stay awake even at

a time such as this? Be vigilant and watch, praying you may be spared a greater test."

"In days to come men will lift up their eyes to Heaven and say, 'Blessed was He who came in the name of God, bringing us the light of salvation'. My Soul is very sorrowful because of the things I must endure and accomplish, that the aspirations of men shall not be denied a response. Tarry, therefore, a while longer, keeping Me company so I do not weaken. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. It is a dreadful thing I have to do."

Then He went away again, but what He prayed no man knows. When He returned all three were asleep, for the wine had befuddled them. Jesus said, "Still sleeping, now it is enough, for the hour has come and the Servant of Man is betrayed into the hands of his enemies. Let us wait no longer, for here they come." Jesus was now quite calm and strengthened.

Now, the place where Jesus had gone was known to Judas who arrived accompanied by the Temple Guards carrying torches, staves and cudgels. Seeing them, Jesus stood up and said, "Whom do you seek?" Judas went up to Him and said, "Sire, I am here." He kissed Jesus to let Him know he came with friendly intentions, but it also identified Him, for though those who came knew Jesus by sight the law required that some other identify Him. But He was not taken according to the law, but by the Temple Guards. Jesus said, "So the Chosen One has been selected for sacrifice by a kiss." But Judas said, "No Sire, there will be no sacrifice."

When the Temple Guards seized hold of Jesus, one with Him drew a sword and wounded one of them. Another said, "Shall we smite with our swords?" But Jesus forbade this, saying to the captain of the Guard, "Were My Kingdom of this world I would order my followers to take up arms, but My Kingdom is not of this world and evil cannot be vanquished by evil." He rebuked them with the words, "Did you expect to find a dangerous criminal who had to be overcome with weapons? I have been among you many days and you left Me alone. Still what has to be done will be done, so do as you must." The captain of the Guard said, "If this were left until tomorrow many would die."

Chapter Twenty-four

JESUS WAS BROUGHT PRIVILY before Annas, son of Seth, who, after questioning Jesus sent Him to the Supreme Council of Jewry, which was assembled. He also sent a message saying, "This man is deluded but nonetheless dangerous, and these are troubled times."

When Jesus was taken away Simon Peter followed at a distance, and after Jesus was brought from the residence of Annas he followed and came to the forecourt of the Temple, but could not go beyond because of the disturbance. Servants lit a brazier of charcoal and stood warming themselves, for the night was cold, and Peter stood with them. While he stood there a relative of the High Priest, named Joses but called John, a follower of Jesus in secret, came and spoke to the woman at the door and went into the chamber hall. He also spoke to Peter.

Then a maidservant came and spoke with the woman at the door, who came over to Peter and said, "You are one of the Galilean's followers." But Peter said, "I am no friend of His, you must be mistaken." However, the woman persisted, saying, "Your speech betrays you," then she cried out to those about the brazier, "Beware, here is one of the Galilean Sorcerer's followers." Then the men clustered about Peter and said,"Certainly, you are a Galilean," and some said, "We have seen him with this rebel." Then they said to Peter, "Did you not cause trouble in the Temple? We have seen you there."

Then the men said, "The woman is right, you are a Galilean, your speech witnesses against you." Others said, "He is just a Galilean," and laughed. Peter then became angry and shouted, "Why do you pester me? I do not know the Man, I have heard about Him but not seen Him."

Then the other disciple came out and told the men to leave Peter alone, he took him by the arm and went out through the gateway. As they went, a cock crew, for the fowls were in the city, and Peter wept bitterly, for he had failed the test. The other had compassion on Peter because of the weakness of the flesh, and Peter said, "I will make amends." Then the disciple took Peter to a safe place nearby.

The Supreme Council had assembled that night in the Chamber of Hewn Stone within the Great Temple. Though the Roman law did not permit men to sit in judgement during the nighthours, the Supreme Council was afraid because of the mood of the people. When Jesus stood before the Council He was asked, "Are You the Chosen One, God's Anointed who will deliver us?" Jesus replied, "I could deliver the people if you would let Me do so."

The High Priest, son-in-law of Annas, sat with the Council, and he said to Jesus, "Are You a Galilean?" When Jesus replied that He was, the High Priest said, "Surely, You, being a learned Man, know that no prophet will come from that place." Jesus made no reply.

Then a man named Nakimedan said to Jesus, "The law does not condemn any man without trying to understand his motives, tell us why You do these things." Jesus answered, "Is it not written that if the people are to be saved there must be a Suffering Deliverer who will also be the Anointed of God?" Nakimedan then said to the Council, "If this Man is what He claims, He is harmless, for he brings suffering to none except Himself." Then another councillor said, "I myself have heard Him say He comes, not to suffer but to bring a sword to free the people."

Jesus stood calm and serene. One of the elders said to Him, "Is it true You were born of fornication, and when born Your father Joseph and Mary, the woman who gave birth to You, had

to flee from the anger of the people?" But twelve of those present witnessed for Him that He was not the child of fornication, but of a rightly married mother.

Though many of the elders tried to make out a case against Jesus they failed, for though there were witnesses who gave false evidence against Him others spoke in favour of Jesus. Then a lawscribe came forward and testified that with others he had heard Jesus declare that the Temple was only a man-made structure which He would destroy in three days. However, there was no agreement among the witnesses as to what had been said or what it meant. Some held Jesus to be a sorcerer who spoke of magic, while others held Him to be a madman whose talk was not rational. Many remained silent and thoughtful.

One of the leading men among the elders stood up and said to Jesus, "Can You not speak for Yourself and answer the accusations?" Jesus said "Are the charges not being fully argued out?" The High Priest said, "I ask You, in the name of the Most High God, tell us, for we do not wish to make any mistake, are You the Chosen One who will deliver us?" Jesus answered, "You ask this because others, witnessing what I do, say this is so. If I say I am the Deliverer, I do not lie. I am a true Son of God, standing at His right hand, ready to obey His will, and I speak with divine authority. I am One destined to bring down the whole structure, replacing it with a new rule."

Upon hearing this, the High Priest said, "We need no more witnesses for we have all heard Him blaspheme. The evidence for treason has been given by His own mouth, He is convicted through words from His own lips. What more is required before your verdict?" But there was no little dispute among the elders, for some said, "It is no crime to say I am the Chosen One who will deliver." Others said, "It is no crime for a man to be misguided and deluded, for will not the Deliverer be disclosed by deeds which this Man has not performed?" It was also said, "Is He not fulfilling the prophesies? Therefore, be wary in judgement."

One of the elders said, "Let us set the good this Man does against the other, and is it not well known that He has a power of

healing not in other men? What wrong has He done? He has not called men to arms against Caesar." The High Priest then stood up and said, "If we allow this Man to go free at this time He will stir up trouble, the people being ripe for revolt. Then Caesar will send his legions against us and the nation will be destroyed, for the hand of Caesar is heavy. We cannot set the life of one man against the lives of many, and those who would set Him free are no friends of Rome, neither can they be friends of our people." Then some said, "His crime is against Rome and not against us," but others said "What? Shall we deliver Him to Roman cruelty?"

The High Priest said, "This can be no concern of ours, we are shepherds of the people. Let those who speak against Caesar stand before Caesar's judgement seat. Let our judgement be that we found Him guilty against Caesar, and then leave Him to Roman mercy. We have no power to condemn Him." Therefore, it then being daylight they bound Jesus and delivered Him to Pilate, with the verdict, "He is guilty against Rome."

It was now, for many, Passover Eve, not all keeping it at the same time, for this was in dispute. Therefore, many who could have spoken for Jesus, being righteous men, went to make their preparations for the Festival. Some thought He would be set free when it was over, but most knew in their hearts He would not be released.

When Jesus was brought before Pontius Pilate, Governor of Juda, who sat upon the judgement seat, the lawscribes testified to the charges saying, "This Man stirs up the people to revolt against Caesar by taking the title 'Son of God', thus claiming to be King of the Jews. He says He brings swords and will purge the land with fire. He blasphemes against Caesar and seeks to bring a new rule of law into the land. He rides into the city proclaiming Himself the Deliverer fulfiling the prophesies. From whom can we be delivered?"

Pilate said to Jesus, "There are many serious charges against You. Have You any defence against them?" When Jesus remained silent, Pilate said, "Tell me, if 'Son of God' is a kingly title are You the King of the Jews?" Jesus said, "Do you ask this for yourself or

are you being influenced by the things said about Me?" Pilate answered, "Am I a Jew to know these things? Your people have handed You over, for, according to their interpretation you have made kingly claims. What have You done?"

Jesus said, "Is an earthly king most worthy to be called the Son of God? Surely, it is goodness and not kingship that counts. I am a Son of God and this title I rightly claim, but if I have a Kingdom it is not of Earth. Had it been otherwise My followers would not have permitted Me to be taken." Pilate said, "You are, then, a king of some kind." Jesus replied, "As you say, I am a king but I do not come to rule, for I was born into the world to testify of the Truth, and all who honour Truth listen to My words." Pilate said, "Who knows what is Truth or what it means? One man's Truth is another man's deception." Jesus answered, "No man can know Truth, for it is not of Earth, which is a place of deception, but God knows Truth and it is with Him alone."

Pilate said, "Does not Caesar know Truth?" To which Jesus replied, "No man knows Truth." Pilate said, "Is the Truth with You or with Caesar? Jesus said, "Caesar's heart is in fornication not in Truth, and this you know to be true. Would you condemn Me for speaking Truth?" Pilate said "Say no more." Jesus said, "See how those who uphold Truth are judged by those holding authority."

Then a man, who was guardian at the Temple testified, "This Man stirs up trouble in the land so the people are ripe for revolt, and His doctrine is not contained in Galilee but is spreading all over Juda." Hearing this, Pilate asked whether the man before him was Galilean, and being told He was, Pilate said, "This Man should be tried before Herod."

Therefore, Jesus was sent to Herod who, being in Jerusalem at the time, was residing nearby, for he was under the protection of the Governor. Herod was pleased for the opportunity to see Jesus and questioned Him at length hoping to see some miracle performed, but he was disappointed in all things. Though many testified against Him before Herod, Jesus remained silent on such matters, for it was His duty and destiny to fulfil the prophesies in the Holy Books.

Herod found Jesus guilty of blasphemy and treason and returned Him to Pilate, saying, "He has committed treason in Juda, let Him be tried for that. It has not been fully proven before me; but this I know, surely if He is released there will be a revolt, for the people are inflamed and your army is not large."

When Pilate had taken his place on the judgement seat and Jesus was before him, he said, "I am told You are a just Man. Can goodness father crime?" Jesus answered, "Hypocritical goodness fathers many crimes. The people live in a night of ignorance, I come to lighten the darkness." Pilate said, "If the light is put out, does that help the people? Is it not better for the light to shine? Even a faint glow is better than none." Jesus said, "Do with Me as you will. I will light a flame which will consume the world, and darkness will be no more." Pilate said, "These things I do not understand, for your people have devious minds and make great issues over things of little importance. What else have You to say?" Jesus replied, "I came to men to manifest the love God has for them. As one of their brothers I have undergone the trials and tribulations of men overcoming the claims of the flesh so the spirit within shines forth with strength. I have pointed the way whereby men may rise to greatness, for such is their destiny."

Pilate then said to the elders and some Levites who witnessed against Jesus, "I am not a Jew, nor am I bound by the laws of the Jews, if this Man has blasphemed against your God, then let Him be tried by your law, but do not mention it to me, for I only listen to the law of Rome." They said, "Do you say that a man who blasphemes against the Divine Caesar is not worthy of death?" Pilate said, "Such a man should die." They said, "This He has done. Also, in proclaiming Himself king He speaks against Caesar and Rome. Had He not done wrong to Caesar we would surely not have delivered Him to you."

Pilate said, "You are a troublesome people and tire me with these things. What would you have me do with your king?" They answered, "These are His words, we have no king except Caesar." Someone said, "And acknowledge no other God." Then one of the elders stood up and said, "Many have testified concerning His

offenses, we know what should be done, but the power is with you. It is not lawful for us to put this Man to death, therefore deal with Him as seems best in your eyes." Pilate said, "Why have you been spared the wrath of your God?"

Then Pilate said to those in the chamber of judgement, "Who else wishes to testify against this Man?" One of the elders, a lawscribe of the Council, said, "This Man has claimed before the people that He is heir to the throne of David, but He is an impostor. He blasphemes the Holy One of our people by saying He is His Son. If these things inflame the people so they revolt, then Rome pays the price. He comes forth from among the poor and disinherited, arousing the people so they seek to overthrow the stability of established authority. If His intentions are put into effect, we are all lost. He proclaims Himself king and declares He will pull down the Temple. He blasphemes against Caesar and says He will supersede Caesar's rule. He slanders Caesar and calls him a fornicator and liar. Under our laws, which you must also uphold, He deserves to die, and if you are not against Caesar, also under the laws of Rome."

Pilate said to Jesus, "The balance weighs against You. Have You anything to say?" When Jesus did not reply Pilate asked Him where He really came from, but Jesus still remained silent. Pilate then said, "Have You nothing to say to me who have the power to condemn or release You? What shall I do with One such as You?" Jesus then said, "The power of Rome rests in your hands, but it gives you power over nothing except My body, do with that as you will. It is not you but those distorting the face of Truth who are to blame." Pilate said, "If I deal with You one way the people will say the authority of Rome supports Your teachings and is not against the things You declare. They will say Your claim to kingship is upheld and may even say You are preferred to Caesar. If I do this I will certainly be called to account, for am I not the hand of Caesar whom You blaspheme and decry?" Jesus said, "I call men to a Kingdom which is not yet of Earth."

Pilate said to Jesus, "No one is compelled to speak on his own behalf." Then, to the others there he said, "Clearly, this man

is not guiltless concerning Caesar, but will any here speak for Him?" Then one of the Perushim stood up and said, "Many could speak for this just Man but have decided their duty lies elsewhere. We are an unbending people sometimes overconcerned with righteousness, but mercy and justice are not least among the things we uphold. What wrong has this Man done to Caesar? He has uttered words which are no more than a breeze from the lips, and surely one so great as Caesar can withstand even the greatest tempest. If Caesar be man, then words would hurt him, but we are a people knowing nothing man can do will harm the highest divinities; therefore, we could be less cautious than others. The greater they are the more they tend to overlook the many weaknesses and failings of men. You, who know the greatness or smallness of he for whom you are the mouthpiece, can incline towards One less knowledgeable in such matters. If you are a worthy representative of Caesar you will uphold his greatness and reveal his indulgence to us. As to whether this Man be the Chosen One or the Deliverer, such questions can only be meaningless to Rome, for even we in Jewry are not in accord as to who they are or what they will do."

Pilate said, "You are a perverse race, overconcerned with unworldly things and ensnaring yourselves in your own net of goodness. You cannot even agree on the dates of your own festivals or the nature of your gods. Instead of heroes you have saints, yet your saintliness makes you unsaintly. You all agree to seek the Truth but dispute which path to follow, and so get nowhere. You agree to follow your God, but some say 'We go this way' and others say 'We go another'. What you say today about this Man you said yesterday about another. Your laws are a maze which I will not attempt to negotiate. Your thoughts are devious and your hearts an unreadable scroll. I am unfortunate in my governorship."

Now, a man named Barabbas had also been brought forth to be judged, and Pilate continued, "I know not one man from the other, who is godly and who is ungodly I cannot tell. You yourselves do not know which of these two men has said and done

these things, or which is your king. All I know is that there must be a strife, the rights of Ceasar must be upheld and justice must be done. The rest I leave in your hands. No two men can suffer for the same crime unless they be in association, but if no association is proven only one may suffer. Therefore, decide among yourselves which man is to die. Both claim to be the Sons of God, both are deliverers, both have blasphemed against Ceasar and your God, and both have struck against Ceasar. One has killed, the Other has not. Clemency is mine to give at this time, but clemency overruling justice is weakness."

"If both these men be killed, then surely the whole of the people will rise in revolt, already the streets are thronged and much wine is being drunk. But if one is released those rejoicing will restrain those who sorrow. It will also divide the people who otherwise might act in accord. If one is truly the Son of God, then the Father will not desert His Son, so it would not be wrong to condemn Him, for thus two will be saved. Responsibility for restraining bloodshed now lies with you, and already the people outside are in riotous mood. Therefore, choose between the two men, both have the same name but one is called Barabbas and the other Barharets, choose which shall be condemned for these crimes and which shall be released. Then announce it to the people."

Pilate said, "I will condemn the one claiming to be King of the Jews, for this is a crime against the peace of Ceasar. You tell me which he is." So all the elders of Jewry went out and consulted among themselves and sent heralds among the people. Jesus remained calm and unshaken, though he had been three hours in the judgement chamber.

When consulting among themselves one of the elders said, "One dies and one is saved, let us be sure we save the one who will deliver us." A Perushim said, "It is not for us to choose which of these is the Chosen One of God, for both are equally deluded. Neither should we choose according to their goodness or their teachings, or even by what they have done. This is a time of turmoil, therefore what is the life of one man against the lives of thousands, for surely this number will die if there is a revolt.

Which will appease the people by his release and which will cause less strife if he dies? May the Most High God help us to choose wisely and may He show compassion on the one who must die. Whichever dies is the saviour of many, and so who are we to condemn him otherwise? Let the other be the bearer of our sins and we will cast him out from among us."

Then some Levites went and addressed the people thronging about, and they shouted, "Crucify the king, save the Deliverer," but all were not in accord and there were many disputes. Then the elders went back to Pilate and said, "Release Barabbas."

Now, when Judas saw what had happened he was exceedingly troubled, for he had hoped neither Jesus nor the other would suffer more than confinement over the Festival period. He was therefore filled with remorse. He sought to return the silver to the Temple treasurers, throwing it before them, saying, "I have betrayed the innocent." They said, "It means nothing to us, be it on your head not ours."

When they told the High Priest about the matter, he said, "This money is tainted and cannot be put into the Temple coffers." So they used the money to buy a plot in the clayfield used by potters, and it was used for the burial of strangers having no kindred. Then, after putting his house in order Judas hanged himself from a ledge.

Pilate ordered that Jesus be scourged after the custom of Rome and delivered Him to the army for crucifixion, and it was then about the sixth hour. The soldiers took Him to a small court where, by custom, men gathered who took pleasure in tormenting the condemned. They danced before Him, spitting and mocking. A victor's crown was plaited from thornbush and He was beaten with burning weeds. Placing a soldier's scarlet mantle about His shoulders, they bowed before Him in mock homage, saying, "Hail, You Great King of the Jews." Others covered His eyes and struck Him, saying, "Now Sorcerer, tell us who hit you then." He was pricked with reeds and the mockers made sport with Him in many ways.

When the cruelty was over, the soldiers stripped off the scarlet

mantle and replaced His tunic, taking Him away to the place of excecution. Because of the scourging and other sufferings Jesus was unable to bear the crosspiece He carried, and a man named Simon the Cyrene, a stranger from Africa just come by way of Joppa, was forced by the soldiers to carry it.

A crowd followed, among which were many lamenting and wailing women. Jesus turned to them and said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not be sorrowful because of Me, for I approach the door of a greater life. Weep instead for yourselves and your children, for the day comes when you will have much greater cause for sorrow. If these things are done while the tree is green and full of life, what would they not do if it were old and dry?"

Coming to the place of execution, which was where the scull of Adam lay buried, the soldiers fastened Jesus to the crosspiece and raised it up into its slot. Then His feet were fastened to the rest. After this they divided His clothes among them; but the mantle, being woven without a seam, was given to one selected by lot. About His neck was hung a plaque, written in latin, which read, 'Jesus Barharets, King of the Jews'. The Jews protested to Pilate about this, but he said, "This is written by my authority."

Two others were crucified with Jesus, one on His right and one on His left. People passing along the road mocked and abused Him, shouting, "Come down and rule over your kingdom." Some said, "Where is Your all powerful Father now?" and, "If You are what You claim to be, get Yourself out of this." Many laughed, saying, "He came to save us but cannot save Himself. Saviour, save Yourself first." The witnesses who stood about the cross also mocked Him. They said, "O Deliverer, now deliver Yourself."

At the ninth hour the sky darkened with cloud, and there was thunder and lightening. Thus the prophesy was fulfilled, which said, 'In the valley of decision, on the day of the Deliverer, the sun and the Earth will be darkened'.

Then Jesus began to speak the words of David and later said, "My God, do not let Your power drain away from Me." Some standing nearby said, "Listen, He is calling on Elijah." Another said, "Let us see if Elijah will come and take Him." A man came

with a sponge soaked in vinegar and duwed and raised it to the lips of Jesus, but He turned His head away. Then some said, "He is ready to give up the spirit."

Jesus opened His eyes and said to those who stood near, "It is nearly over." Manilaus, the centurion who stood facing Jesus, said, "Truly, this is a Man." Then someone shouted, "It is over," and there was an outbreak of wailing from the women.

Chapter Twenty-five

A NUMBER OF WOMEN stood off watching from a distance, among them being Mary of Magdala, also called Mary of Bethena, Marmaryam and Mary the mother of James the Younger and Joseph, and Salome who had followed Jesus, administering to His needs in Galilee. There were also others who had come to Jerusalem with Him, but the only disciple there was James. When the women wept with pity, he said to them, "I see now what I was blind to before, let us not waste tears in futile pity but strengthen our hearts so His sacrifice is not in vain. He did this to change the hearts of the people, let us be worthy of Him."

Then James left, for he received word that the disciples were being sought, it being feared they would set fire to the Great Temple, or arouse the people so there was a revolt. There had been disturbances in the city, but because of Barabbas only three were killed.

Mary, the mother of Jesus, was taken to the house of John, and Markus and Joses also came there. It was in that house that the first words of this gospel were written.

Many of the disciples had deserted Jesus and were in hiding, others went about not knowing what to do, their hearts full of misery and sorrow. They lacked the influence needed to save Jesus from the common pit of criminals, and Mary, His mother, did not claim the body, though the arrangements made were unknown to her.

Now, one of the elders of the Supreme Council was a man named Josias, called Joseph of Abramatha, son of Yokkim, son of Nathan, son of Elezar, son of Elihu, son of Yakim, son of Zadok, who lived on the Merchant's Road, a day's journey from Jerusalem. He also owned an estate North-West of the city. He had a brother-in-law named Nikodius, and both were secret followers of Jesus. Joseph of Abramatha, the Wise Commander, had been present at the Council when it sat in judgement on Jesus, and He supported Him, but many more who could have done so were absent because of the hour.

When evening drew near and Jesus had been four hours on the cross, Joseph of Abramatha, being a man of status and authority, went to Pontius Pilate without fear, for they were friends. He requested the body of Jesus, his kinsman, saying "It is written in our law that the sun shall not be permitted to set on the body of a murdered man." The Governor said, "You are an upright man and I will not deny this to you." But he was surprised to hear Jesus had died so quickly and he sent for the centurion in charge of the execution, a man known to Joseph, who assured Pilate that Jesus was undoubtedly dead.

On hearing this, Pilate granted the Commander custody of the body, and though some Jews present objected, wishing Jesus to be buried in the criminals' pit, they had to submit to Roman law. Yet the Jewish law also stated it was the duty of the nearest relative to dispose of the body, irrespective of how death occurred.

Now, this being the Sabbath Eve the bodies could not remain upon their crosses after nightfall. Therefore, the Jews requested of Pilate that the legs of the condemned men be broken, allowing the bodies to hang free so they quickly died.

So the soldiers took mallets and broke the legs of the other two, but when they came to Jesus the centurion said, "He is already dead."

Joseph the Commander took his son Joses, Nikodius and one other, and having already purchased a linenshroud went to the place of execution and removed Jesus from the cross. Wrapping Him in the sheet they carried Jesus through the darkness to a tomb

already cut out of the rock. It was a two-chambered cavern, North-West of the city, having a ledge running around the inside, and the entrance faced Eastward towards the place of execution. It was the North end of a garden planted with cabbages, and the gardener was also custodian of the tomb.

When Jesus had been placed inside, a great stone was rolled across the entrance and two men were left on guard beside it.

Now, things happened on the Sabbath which may not be written, for they are in the Secret of the Lord, known only to the elect of the House of God, which is in the Isle of Departure.

Those who guarded the tomb, when questioned regarding these things, said, "The disciples came early and carried Him away for burial in a proper manner at another place, for He was laid here only because of the Sabbath and it was not His tomb." None questioned them further, for this was proper, and the guards were only placed to protect certain bodies from those who would work evil sorceries on them. Those who improperly tampered with bodies being put to death.

After the Sabbath was over some women came with spices and oils to deal with the body of Jesus, but when they came to the tomb they found that the great stone had been rolled aside. The guards were gone, but a young man was seated just inside the entrance and he said to them, "Do not be afraid of me, for I am a friend. Jesus, whom you seek, is not here, but go and tell Peter that He will be with him as promised." The women were very much afraid and left in haste.

When they had gone, Marmaryam came with another and stood outside the tomb weeping, and as she did so a voice behind her said, "Why do you weep?" Turning, she saw the gardener and said to him, "They have taken Jesus away and I have no knowledge of what has happened to Him." Then the gardener told her to go to John the son of Annas.

Peter and two others were also making their way to the tomb when they met the women coming away. The women told them what they had seen and heard, and Peter, thinking they were talking wildly through sorrow, sent one of his companions to go with them.

Then he hastened on to the tomb, arriving to find it empty and no one there. So, being perplexed, he sat down outside while the other went in search of the gardener. While seated there, he saw a shining figure in the gloom within the tomb and knew it for a Spirit Messenger, and he heard a voice saying, "Jesus has fulfilled the promises and is truly the Chosen One, God's Anointed."

Then the other returned with the gardener who told Peter to go and meet John the son of Annas, at Emeras, about nine miles distant, and they went to that place, which was a village not far from the house of Joseph of Abramatha.

Arriving there, they found John the son of Annas and another John, and James and Joses, the sons of Joseph by Anna (his first wife, the fair stranger), his son by Mary, and Mark his adopted son. Nikodius was also there with Lazarus, and they were all in the house of Hosius. Later, a number of envoys came.

Then, while they were seated at a table, Jesus came among them and said, "Let us take food together and rejoice, for the prophecies have been fulfilled regarding the Chosen One as it is said in the Holy Books. The Servant of Man is arisen from among those who sleep, for death has not claimed Him. But these things, while fulfiling the promises will not bring about the Rule of God, for this will not come while men sit waiting for signs. The people have been given that which fulfils their hopes and aspirations, now surely they will believe in My cause and arise to sweep evil aside."

"Now the Spirit of Truth dwells among you, though it is still out of place in a world under the rule of man." Then Jesus told of all the things which had been written in the Holy Books concerning these things and how the Chosen One, God's Anointed, would be disowned by men, would suffer for their wilfulness and arise from among the dead to appear on the third day. Then he said, "Are not all these things fulfilled in Me?" Then He departed.

Some days later, all the disciples who were the chosen of Jesus met in a secret place and Jesus joined them and proved Himself to those who still disbelieved, and they said, "Sire, forgive our disbelief and forgive us for doubting the things You taught

concerning Yourself." Jesus said, "This is the day of the coming of the Lord who will rule the Earth. Yet is it not written, 'This will be a day of darkness and not of light'?"

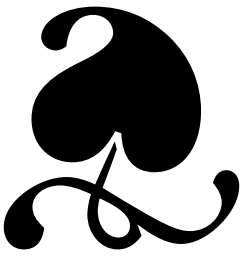
Then Jesus spoke these words, "I go to a place far away beyond the world, where you may not follow, for I fulfil the hopes of all men. Now you go out carrying the message that the prophesies have been fulfilled and the time is at hand when the Rule of God should be established among men. For, the promises having been fulfilled for the people, surely they will now believe and rally to the cause of Good, sweeping wickedness and evil from the face of the Earth. Say to them, 'That has been done that had to be done'. Now you must take up the burden, for if you would become Children of God and reclaim your lost heritage you must prove yourselves worthy heirs. Let not all the suffering be in vain."

Then He told them secret things concerning the Rule of God and how men should be freed from trouble, distress and pain. He explained how each man could be freed of all sickness and see beyond the range of the eye. These and many other things were explained, and also many things concerning the Dominion of the Spirit. He said, "Follow My teachings, and the power of the Holy Spirit will come to you enabling you to do many great things causing wonder among others. Yet all these are the rightful possessions of men, if they will but establish their worthiness."

"Think not that God will descend from Heaven to do the work of men; the world is yours, but life is with God, in the end there is the accounting. Man must be responsible for his own destiny, so seek no divine intervention while men remain apathetic. God comes to the aid only of those who strive, who surmount the difficulties and obstacles of life." Having said these things Jesus revealed Himself to them in His form of glory, so they might know Truth had been established in Him. Then they were all bedazzled and astonished at what man could become and the extent of his powers awaiting development. Then they knew Jesus was all He claimed to be and hailed Him as Christ the Anointed by God, for in Him the Spirit of Christ was manifested as in no other. After this, Jesus left.

Now, rumours of strange events came to the ears of certain Jews who were Herodians and Sadducees, then they were exceedingly angry with those in power who had inclined towards Joseph, the Wise Commander. He said to those who raised their voices against him, "Why do you seek to stir up trouble? Those in high places, holding positions of power, did only what they thought best and complied with the law. What else could they do? I received the body of my kinsman because this was my duty and I dealt with it decently, letting it rest in my private tomb over the Sabbath."

Despite his authority there was evidence against Joseph and he was imprisoned, being kept under constant guard. One Sabbath, during the nighthours, the Spirit of Jesus was projected to Joseph so he was comforted, but the guards, seeing It, fainted with fear. Then Joseph was brought before Pontius Pilate, but the Governor found no fault in him and he was released.

Later, Annas and his son-in-law, who were then the High Priests of Jewry, came to the house of Joseph bringing with them the Holy Books written on scrolls within their box. They requested that he swear upon it in the sacred name of Aweh, but he made oath only that he had done no wrong or broken no law. The wise Commander remained in his house for many days, after which he went about unmolested.

Then, when Pontius Pilate returned to Rome Joseph departed from his homeshores, coming to Setnadoin from whence he moved to a well at the foot of a hill. He brought with him a clay cup which had been set in silver by a silversmith, and this was that cup used by Jesus. Some say Joseph married Holy Mary after the death of his wife, but this is a known heresy put about by those in ignorance of what is written, for his wife was not that Mary.